



One FOCUS

Human Services Integration Project

Final Report

November 26, 2021



Restrictions



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This report may include or make reference to future oriented financial information. Readers are cautioned that since these financial projections are based on assumptions regarding future events, actual results will vary from the information presented even if the hypotheses occur, and the variations may be material.

Comments in this report are not intended, nor should they be interpreted to be, legal advice or opinion.

KPMG has no present or contemplated interest in the City of Kingston nor are we an insider or associate of the City of Kingston. Accordingly, we believe we are independent of the City of Kingston and are acting objectively.

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Executive Summary



A. Background to the Review

The One Focus project (“One Focus” or the “Project”) is an initiative launched by the City of Kingston (the “City”) in April 2021 to enhance the delivery of social services through two key areas of focus:

- Increasing the degree of integration within the Department of Housing and Social Services (the “Department”) so as to make it easier for clients to access services, regardless of their circumstances; and
- Streamlining administrative processes for Departmental staff to allow them to focus a greater portion of their time on life stabilization and other supports for clients.

Funded by the Province of Ontario through the Audit and Accountability Fund, One Focus builds upon the findings of the initial review of the Department’s processes for social services conducted in the fall of 2019, updated to reflect:

- Changes introduced by the Department since the 2019 review, including strategies adopted in response to the ongoing pandemic;
- Changes introduced by the Province through the Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan (the “Renewal Plan”); and
- The experience of other consolidated municipal service managers that have undertaken similar initiatives.

In addition to considering recent changes to the delivery of social services, One Focus has also considered future changes announced by the Province that will significantly impact the Department, including:

- The transition of employment support services from the Department to an external service provider, expected to occur in 2023; and
- The uploading by the Province of the financial support component of Ontario Works, expected to occur in 2024.

The work involved in One Focus was led by a Transformation Management Office (“TMO”) comprised of Departmental staff, assisted by KPMG LLP (“KPMG”). In addition, a number of Department staff volunteered their time and efforts to participate in staff working groups established to advance various initiatives under One Focus.

This report provides a summary of the key findings and outcomes of the Project.

Executive Summary



B. Key Themes

The City is designated by Provincial legislation as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (the “Service Manager”) for social services within Frontenac County, which includes Ontario Works, Children’s Services and Housing and Homelessness Programming. During 2021, the City budgeted just over \$78.9 million for social services, the majority of which (\$61.6 million or 78%) is recovered through Provincial grants, County contributions and other non-taxation revenue. Overall, the City has budgeted a total of \$17.3 million in taxation support for social services for 2021.

The initial review of the Department’s processes conducted in the fall of 2019 identified a number of potential opportunities to enhance the efficiency and service delivery of social services and the intention of One Focus was to advance these to implementation. At the same time, One Focus involved:

- An updating of the current state assessment of the Department’s processes to reflect changes resulting from the pandemic (e.g. reduced caseloads, remote working arrangements, remote delivery of services) and the implementation of the Province’s Renewal Plan;
- A review of strategies undertaken by other Service Managers for better integration of service delivery; and
- Data analysis to validate the findings of the initial review.

Through the work undertaken as part of One Focus, the following key observations and themes relating to the Department have emerged:

- While the Province’s Renewal Plan will result in meaningful efficiencies for Department personnel, there continues to be areas for improvement, particularly with respect to the continued use of manual processes and paper documentation.
- In certain instances, such as integrated consents, measures implemented by the Department are not being fully utilized, resulting in continued constraints on service delivery from the perspectives of both operating efficiencies and the provision of integrated services to clients.
- The operating environment for the delivery of social services will continue to evolve as the Province implements new initiatives, specifically with respect to electronic data management and the ongoing transformation of employment services. While these may have impacts on the Department with respect to processes and resource requirements, they are not addressed as part of One Focus as (i) the ultimate impacts are unknown at this time; and (ii) the direction with respect to these initiatives rests with the Province and not the City.
- The Department continues to see an increasing need for life stabilization supports on the part of its clients, validating the premise of One Focus and its overall objective of maximizing access to, and the capacity to deliver, high-impact supports.

Executive Summary



- The experience of other service managers has demonstrated that there are different approaches to integrating the delivery of human services, providing a range of options that can be considered by the City, with integration opportunities available for different areas within the Department.
- From an overall perspective, the highest potential for integration – as measured by the prevalence of clients accessing different services – rests with Ontario Works and housing. While there are instances of clients also accessing children’s services, these are less pronounced and as such, likely represent a lower area of priority.

C. Priorities and Next Steps

One Focus has identified five priority areas of focus for the Department as it moves towards a more integrated model to the delivery of social services and adjusting its operations to the realities of the ongoing pandemic and future Provincial changes:

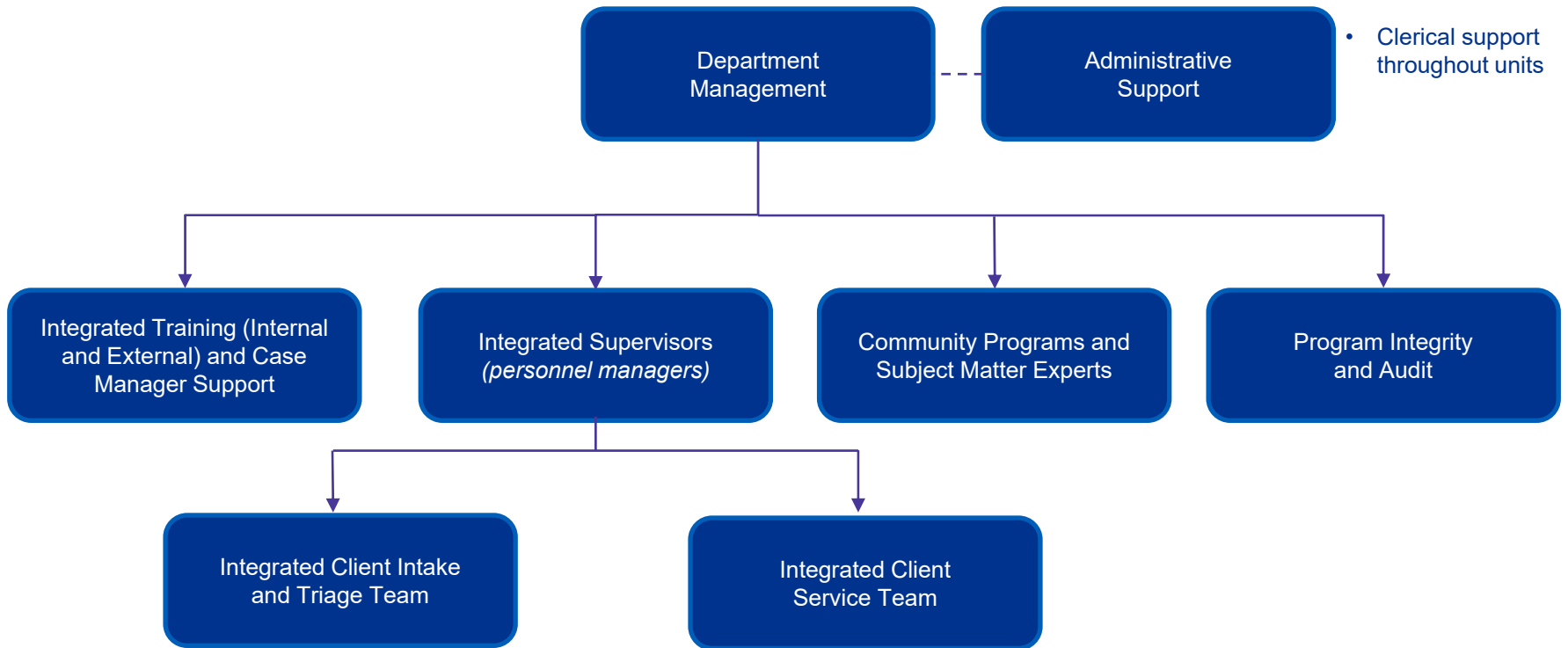
1. Increasing utilization of the existing integrated consent forms in order to streamline the process for clients to access different services;
2. Modifying the form and use of the current participation agreement to maximize the impact of life stabilization supports for clients;
3. Establishing multiple channels for community outreach and service delivery to clients;
4. Adapting the Department’s physical resource requirements to reflect changes in work processes resulting from the ongoing pandemic;
5. Implementing process changes to further operating efficiencies, creating more capacity for the delivery of front-line client service.

In addition to the above, One Focus also identified the need to revise the Department’s organizational structure, including lines of reporting and responsibilities, to foster an integrated approach to social services and adapt the Department to upcoming changes to be introduced by the Province.

The Department has already commenced the process for implementation of these opportunities, with staff working groups established to advance a number of the initiatives and a new organizational design developed for the Department that supports the delivery of integrated service to clients while at the same time positioning the Department to adjust to both the transition of employment support services in 2023 and the uploading of the financial assistance component of Ontario Works in 2024.

A graphical depiction of the proposed organizational structure is provided on the following page.

Executive Summary



- Clerical support throughout units

- Case Managers triage client needs for all H&SS programs and assist with client applications for services
- Clerical support for front-end services (i.e., reception, intake, scheduling)

- Case Managers responsible for providing life stabilization services to social assistance clients
- Community Programs Caseworkers providing services to those seeking housing, children’s services, MFAP, etc.
- Case Managers responsible for issuing social assistance benefits and ongoing financial assistance

Executive Summary



D. Financial Analysis

While subject to change, the experience of other Service Managers has indicated that the transition of employment support services to an external service provider will result in a funding reduction of approximately \$1.2 million per year, representing 20% of the Ontario Works administration funding currently provided by the Province. The One Focus strategy for offsetting this funding decrease (and potentially providing for additional savings) involves a combination of:

- Reductions in administrative cost allocations to the Department, estimated to be in the order of \$676,000; and
- A reduction in the Department's staffing complement (unionized and non-unionized), with the intention being that staffing reductions will be accomplished through attrition (e.g. retirements and voluntary departures) as opposed to involuntary separations.

Recognizing the potential for impacts on Department employees, One Focus has included consultation with and input from Departmental staff, including:

- Periodic presentations to Departmental staff and management;
- Meetings with representatives of the City's collective bargaining unit to discuss the progress of the Project;
- "Ask Me Anything" sessions providing the opportunity for Department staff to pose specific questions concerning One Focus; and
- The establishment of various working groups comprised of Department staff to undertake analysis in support of One Focus.

E. Implementation

The work conducted to date on One Focus has laid the groundwork for ongoing implementation activities during 2022, with the Department having established staff working groups to support the implementation of each of the identified priorities. Additionally, the Department, in conjunction with the City's human resources function and collective bargaining union, will transition towards the proposed organizational structure, including evaluating impacted positions and undertaking necessary planning for voluntary reductions in advance of the transformation of employment support services in 2023.



One FOCUS

Human Services Integration Project

Introduction to One Focus



Introduction to One Focus



A. Background to the Project

In 2019, the City completed a review of their Human and Social Services (Ontario Works, Housing and Homeless, Children’s Services, Long-term Care) which identified potential opportunities for improved efficiencies, cost reductions, customer service enhancements and effective risk management. Subsequently, throughout 2020-2021, the Province worked with municipalities on a plan to modernize the delivery of social assistance. As part of its plan, front line workers will have more time to support client life stabilization needs, while the Province gradually takes on more program administration. Applications for social assistance will be centralized with the Province, and municipal partners will use their expertise to deliver person-centered casework.

In connection with the implementation of the 2019 review’s findings, and the Province’s more recent modernization and integration initiatives, the City established One Focus, an initiative intended to transition the delivery of social services through (1) increasing the extent of digitization of documentation and processes; (2) enhancing operating efficiencies through reductions in administrative processes; and (3) increasing inter-functional collaboration between different functional units within the Department.

A summary of the key elements of One Focus is provided below.

Project Objectives <i>How will we define success?</i>	Project Drivers <i>Why are we doing this?</i>	Project Principles <i>What’s important to us?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-evaluate and integrate service delivery, creating an efficient, effective and streamlined social services system that focuses on people, providing a range of services and supports to respond to the client’s unique needs and address barriers to success. Reduce administrative burden to create staff capacity to provide high-impact wraparound life stabilization support for clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further build and strengthen client-centered services delivery Streamline services to be more efficient and effective Foster consistent staff approach Further empower clients in the process Only need the client to tell their often complicated and difficult “story” once 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritizing outcomes of employment, financial resilience, independence and well-being for clients Supporting positive client and staff experiences Assigning roles to where they make the most sense and improve efficiency Ensure changes are successfully implemented while trying to minimize impacts on City staff Designing in consultation with community delivery partners

Introduction to One Focus



B. The Case for Change

The impetus for One Focus stems from four key factors impacting the City's delivery of social services:

- While the City, by virtue of its designation as Service Manager, is responsible for the delivery (and partial funding) of social services, the Province has mandated significant changes to the delivery of social services. In certain instances, this has resulted in changes to operational processes (e.g. digital applications, use of reloadable payment cards), requiring the City to adjust its own internal processes and staff responsibilities to accommodate these changes. More significant, however, are the announced changes to employment support services (2023) and the financial benefits component of Ontario Works (2024), both of which are expected to have a major impact on the City's role in the delivery of social services and, by extension, the number and responsibilities of staff required to support service delivery. While the financial impacts of the uploading of the financial benefits component of Ontario Works cannot be reasonably determined at this time, the experience of other Service Managers that have already undergone the transformation of employment support services to the new external provider model has indicated that the City can expect a reduction in its administration funding for Ontario Works of 20%, representing approximately \$1.2 million in reduced annual funding.
- The ongoing pandemic has resulted in significant reductions in caseloads for social services, with Ontario Works clients decreasing by 25% from pre-pandemic levels and childcare subsidies caseloads decreasing by up to 50%. In addition to impacting the level of demand for social services, the pandemic is expected to have lasting impacts on how the City delivers services, with an increased focus on remote as opposed to in-person interactions between clients and case managers which involves making the client the place of business, as well as the potential for hybrid working arrangements for Department staff that would change the Department's facility requirements.
- As noted in the 2019 review, the Department's internal processes and ways of working are characterized by operating inefficiencies (e.g. manual processes and other non-system work arounds, use of hard copy as opposed to electronic documentation), instances of absences of coordination and information sharing between different functional units within the Department and a relatively high percentage of staff time spent on administrative as opposed to client service functions.
- The Department has noted an increase in the level of need of its clients, who face increasing challenges as a result of mental health issues, substance abuse, housing affordability among other factors. This increase in client acuity creates a greater demand on staff to deliver higher impact life stabilization supports, requiring more time and effort and in turn impacting staff health and wellness and engagement.

Introduction to One Focus



These factors, both individually and in aggregate, are seen as requiring significant changes to how the Department delivers services to meet the needs of its clients while at the same time adapting to impending changes to be implemented by the Province. One Focus is intended to address these challenges by:

- Integrating service delivery for an improved client-centered approach, allowing for a holistic approach to meeting client needs vs. service-by-service delivery (i.e. separate focus on Ontario Works, childcare and housing and homelessness);
- Accelerating digital delivery solutions, in turn supporting the centralization and automation of service delivery and the expansion of channels for service delivery to adjust to pandemic impacts and make the client the place of business;
- Removing administrative barriers to create capacity for staff to more effectively support client needs through the delivery of higher impact life stabilization supports; and
- Adapting the Department's processes and organizational structure to facilitate the implementation of employment support services transformation and the uploading of the financial benefits component of Ontario Works.

C. Expected Benefits

In addition to structuring the Department to accommodate the expected reduction in Provincial funding as a result of the transformation of employment support services, One Focus is intended to contribute towards clients receiving the full benefit of services through increased integration and focus on higher impact life stabilization supports, while increasing operating efficiencies and demonstrating value-for-money for the use of taxpayer funds. Additionally, Department staff are expected to benefit through reduced administrative demands and increased consistency in and support for service delivery, with the expectation of improved employee morale, working conditions and engagement.



One FOCUS

Human Services Integration Project

Key Themes



Key Themes



The work undertaken as part of One Focus has identified a number of key themes relating to the delivery of social services by the Department and which inform potential changes that can be introduced in support of enhanced integration and benefits for clients while at the same time improving operating efficiencies.

1. While the Province’s Renewal Plan has resulted in meaningful efficiencies for Department personnel, there continues to be areas for improvement, particularly with respect to the continued use of manual processes and paper documentation. The 2019 review involved process mapping of more than 30 services that are delivered by the Department, which identified a range of potential opportunities for enhanced efficiencies and client service interactions. As part of One Focus, KPMG worked with more than 40 City staff to review and update these process maps in order to reflect the most recent processes for service delivery, as well as to ensure that the potential opportunities are still relevant and valid. A summary of processes recently reviewed as part of One Focus is provided below.

Ontario Works		Housing & Homelessness	Childcare
File Transfers to City of Kingston	Reimbursements (EI)	Application Intake	Fee Subsidy
File Transfers from City of Kingston	Reimbursements (Other)	Eligibility	Intake
Verification Interview Not Completed	Repayments	Annual Review	Monthly Financial Payment
Income Reporting	Family Responsibility Office	Ineligible Process	Ongoing Case Management
PA Updates	Duty Case Manager	Part B Application	
Intake - Phone	Schedule	Financial Transactions – Administration	
Intake - Interpreter	Reception and Walk-ins	Financial Transactions – LSR Reporting	
Intake - Online	Funerals	IAH Supplements – Wait List	
Intake – Temp Care	MFAP	IAH Supplements – Housing First	
Case Manager	Discretionary Benefits - Health		
OW Reinstates	Discretionary Benefits - ERE		
Real Time Payments	Discretionary Residential Benefits		
	DRB Payment		

In addition to updating process maps developed through the 2019 Review, One Focus also involved the development of new process maps reflecting new processes introduced as part of the Province’s Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan, specifically:

- Reloadable Payment Cards
- Social Assistance Digital Application Intake – Clerks
- Social Assistance Digital Application Intake – Case Managers
- Social Assistance Digital Application Immediate Verification and Locally Assessed

Key Themes



Based on the process mapping conducted (updates and new processes), it was determined that 36 process efficiency opportunities and six client service opportunities identified during the 2019 review were still relevant for implementation. In addition, 51 opportunities were identified with respect to the new processes implemented by the Province, resulting in more than 90 potential opportunities for implementation.

With respect to these opportunities, we make the following comments and observations:

- a) **Impacts from Provincial changes** – The Province’s launch of their Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan has resulted in some efficiencies for Ontario Works staff, with Centralized Intake, Social Assistance Digital Applications (SADA) and Risk Based Eligibility Review (RBED) identified as creating capacity for intake clerks and reducing some of the administrative burden on the case worker. The transition to centralized intake and digital applications has also created some new process constraints while Social Services staff and management adjust to new procedures and standard work. It is anticipated that further efficiencies will be achieved with the full implementation of Electronic Document Management (EDM) in the fall.
- b) **Paper-based processes** – Although the Province has launched EDM (full implementation anticipated for Kingston in the fall), processes within Ontario Works are still heavily paper-based, and significant waste is created from the maintenance and movement of paper files and checklists across all social services programs i.e. paper-based file checklists are produced for every file, even digital applications received through the province’s centralized intake portal. Housing and Homelessness processes are also heavily paper-based and all programs could find efficiencies by moving to electronic document management.
- c) **Virtual case management** – The global pandemic has obviously impacted how social services staff interacted with their clients. In March 2019, prior to the pandemic, electronic communication, available through the province’s MyBenefits App, was in its early stages of implementation. Over a year later, with case workers still working remotely, regular electronic communication and phone meetings with clients have become the norm. This has created significant efficiencies for staff, as well improved service access and convenience for clients. While Ontario Works has made considerable progress in the use of technology enabled communications and interactions with clients, Housing has yet to follow suit. Investing into existing online capabilities of Rent Café and maximizing the use of other digitally enabled systems would help to position Housing for seamless service integration moving forward.

Detailed process maps and identified opportunities for enhancements to operating efficiencies and customer service interactions have been provided to the City under separate cover.

The operating environment for the delivery of social services will continue to evolve as the Province implements new initiatives, specifically with respect to electronic data management and the ongoing transformation of employment services. While these may have impacts on the Department with respect to processes and resource requirements, they are not addressed as part of One Focus as (i) the ultimate impacts are unknown at this time; and (ii) the direction with respect to these initiatives rests with the Province and not the City.

Key Themes



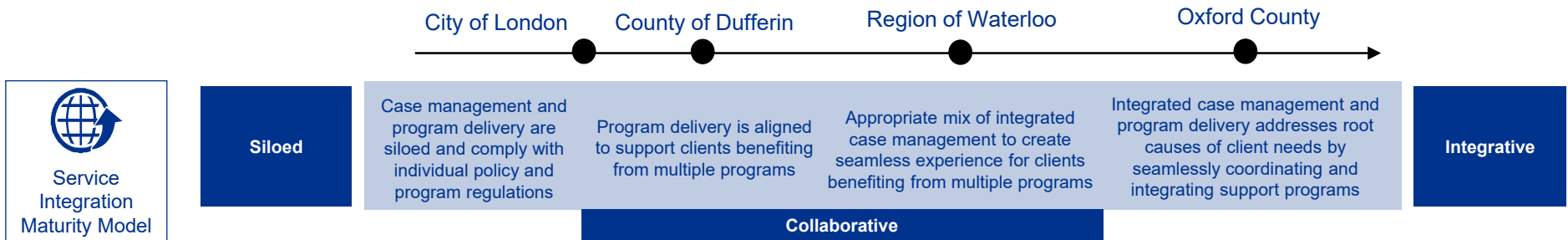
2. **In certain instances, such as integrated consents, measures implemented by the Department are not being fully utilized, resulting in continued constraints on service delivery from the perspectives of both operating efficiencies and the provision of integrated services to clients.** While integrated consents are intended to support the streamlined delivery of services by facilitating information sharing within the Department, the current lack of integrated consents was identified as the most significant barrier to service integration. It is our understanding that an integrated consent initiative had begun previously within the City's Social Services, but full implementation was not achieved. An effective integrated consent form and a consistent approach to obtaining client consents is viewed as the single most important component to beginning the service integration journey and in the absence of this, services continue to be at risk of siloed delivery.
3. **The Department continues to see an increasing need for life stabilization supports on the part of its clients, validating the premise of One Focus and its overall objective of maximizing access to, and the capacity to deliver, high-impact supports.** Based on discussions with Department staff, we understand that the City's client base for social services is characterized by increasing acuity as a result of a greater prevalence of mental health issues, substance abuse, housing unaffordability and impacts of the pandemic. This increase in client needs requires a greater focus by staff on life stabilization supports, which are defined by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association as:
 - A range of services and supports to respond to clients' unique needs and address barriers to success so they can move towards employment and independence.
 - For Ontario Works, life stabilization supports are intended to support Ontario Works recipients and non-disabled adults from ODSP cases to become employment ready.
 - Critical to supporting people become employment ready and move towards independence. People can still work while addressing challenges, but the likelihood of finding and keeping employment and being independent is higher if they are able to address underlying issues that may be barriers to success.

The delivery of increasing levels of life stabilization supports requires an increased level of work effort on the part of staff, which can be problematic given the current inefficiencies present within the Department's processes and the significant administrative demands on case managers. As a result, the Department is at risk of adverse employee impacts while at the same time being unable to address the full range of client needs.

Key Themes



4. **The experience of other service managers has demonstrated that there are different approaches to integrating the delivery of human services, providing a range of options that can be considered by the City, with integration opportunities available for different areas within the Department.** As part of One Focus, a jurisdictional scan of selected Service Managers – City of London, Dufferin County, Oxford County, Region of Waterloo – was undertaken to identify potential approaches to increased service integration, specifically with respect to organizational structure and staff responsibilities. The results of the review indicated that the selected service managers were at different stages with respect to the extent of integration, which provided options for consideration when evaluating potential structures for the Department.



Graphical depictions of the organizational structures adopted by the comparative Service Managers are included as Appendix A to our report.

5. **From an overall perspective, the highest potential for integration – as measured by the prevalence of clients accessing different services – rests with Ontario Works and housing. While there are instances of clients also accessing children’s services, these are less pronounced and as such, likely represent a lower area of priority.** An analysis of so-called client intersections, which involve the same clients accessing different social services, indicate a high degree of crossover involving social services and housing, with 47% of clients on the subsidized housing waitlist receiving social assistance and 61% of the By Name List clients experiencing homelessness in receipt of social assistance. The analysis also points to a lower rate of client intersections involving children’s services. In June 2021, there were 381 families receiving the Childcare Fee Subsidy, of which 9% were identified as being social assistance clients. The analysis of client intersections demonstrates the strong potential for operating efficiencies and client service enhancements between social assistance and housing and validates the City’s continued focus in these areas.



One FOCUS

Human Services Integration Project

Priorities



Priorities



Through the work undertaken as part of One Focus, five priorities have been identified for future implementation activities (listed in no particular order):

- Increasing utilization of the existing integrated consent forms in order to streamline the process for clients to access different services;
- Modify the form and use of the current participation agreement to maximize the impact of life stabilization supports for clients;
- Establishing multiple channels for community outreach and service delivery to clients;
- Adapting the Department's physical resource requirements to reflect changes in work processes resulting from the ongoing pandemic; and
- Implementing process changes to further operating efficiencies, creating more capacity for the delivery of front-line client service.

Each of these priorities is discussed in further detail on the following pages.

From an implementation perspective, it is important to recognize that each of the identified priorities involves different levels of change, resource requirements and by extension timeframes. As such, not all priorities are expected to be addressed during 2022.

In addition to these priorities, One Focus also identified the need to revise the Department's organizational structure, including lines of reporting and responsibilities, to foster an integrated approach to social services delivery while also positioning the Department to adapt to upcoming changes to be introduced by the Province. The analysis of the proposed organizational structure is discussed in the subsequent chapter of our report.

Priority 1 – Integrated Consents



A. Overview

To further build and strengthen client-centered service delivery and concurrent with the “one-window” service integration approach of creating an efficient, effective and streamlined human services system that focuses on people, implementation and utilization of an effective integrated consent form is the single most important component to beginning the service integration journey. We understand that the City has developed an integrated consent, but full implementation of this tool is lacking.

An integrated consent allows staff to share information and provide better service to clients accessing Housing and Social Services. Sharing information between divisions will simplify the process for clients, allow staff to communicate with each other in order to coordinate services and provide more effective, holistic, life stabilization supports to clients.

Each division within the Housing and Social Services department has their own consent forms; these forms are typically mandated by the Province and are limited to sharing information related to eligibility for a specific program. An Integrated Consent to Share Information form goes beyond eligibility information and allows for the sharing of information between staff in different divisions to improve service planning for clients and facilitate a case-conferencing approach.

The benefits of having a signed consent will mean less duplication, more streamlined processes, and better service to clients creating efficiencies for staff and clients in providing, gathering and sharing required documents among the different program areas.

Best practice evident in all peer CMSMs interviewed for our jurisdictional review identified the following opportunities for an Integrated Consent to Share Information form to be effective in the following ways:

- To share information between staff in different divisions for service planning that will benefit the client.
- Staff engage more fully with clients at first point of contact when required to explain to clients the consent’s purpose and benefits.
- To use the information to explore options and/or opportunities for clients. For example, if a client comes in to access OW but may also need Child Care Subsidy, the consent will allow the OW caseworker to connect with Child Care Subsidy worker to determine what options could benefit the client.
- To simplify the client’s service pathway in navigating multiple services. For example, the consent would allow sharing of documents that are needed within another division so that the client does not have to provide duplicate information. Information may also be shared to help connect the client to other resources within the department.

Priority 1 – Integrated Consents



B. Implementation Considerations

This opportunity is viewed as having an immediate implementation timeframe, reflecting both the limited extent of additional resources required for completion and the need to embed a culture of service integration excellence in the City.

Phase 1: Establish Privacy and Consent Working Group

This working group will focus efforts on reviewing local policy related to consents, and creating strategies to increase utilization of the consent for client benefit. The working group will identify how best to track, store, and share information regarding the consent among departments, and develop a training program for staff implementation.

As reported by peer CMSMs interviewed during the jurisdictional review, the biggest challenge for the integrated consent was not in the development of the form itself, but in how it would be implemented. We recommend the City consider the following components to an effective staff training program and implementation plan:

- A consistent approach to obtaining, tracking and filing integrated client consents
- Online training and resources developed to support staff in explaining to clients its purpose and benefits, available on the department's internal portal.
- An information sheet to be provided to clients to inform them of their choice and flexibility to share what information they choose. If they choose not to sign, existing business practices would be used.
- A Tip Sheet created for staff that outlines when to, and when not to, access client information after consent is given.

Phase 2: Implement the consent within all divisions and evaluate benefits and challenges

The intention of this evaluation is to identify and quantify the increase in positive client outcomes that result from inter-departmental use of the integrated consent and validate the conclusion that sharing information to support a case conferencing approach to client service will achieve intended outcomes. Developing a method for data collection including client case studies, key findings, and lessons learned will be an effective resource for the City in support of future human service integration initiatives.

Priority 1 – Integrated Consents



As part of the implementation, the City should consider opportunities to use integrated consents in the following ways:

- Eliminating the need for the client to share their circumstances and copies of their identification multiple times
- The opportunity to eliminate some income verification steps and share documents between divisions to support income verification i.e. the workers can share details if the client has only provided some of the required income verification information and only to one worker. There are many instances where a client is asked to bring in a specific list of details/documents and something is missing. One caseworker can take details and copy/send to the other.
- Obtaining consent to communicate electronically with clients applicable to all divisions
- Eliminating the Annual Review process for clients on the Housing and Child Care waitlist that list their source of income as OW
- Automatically completing referrals to subsidized housing waitlist and applicable child care referrals; embracing the service philosophy identified by the Client Focus Staff Working Group rooted in the assumption that the client could benefit from all human services programs and resources available to them, instead of requiring the client to request additional support. The client would feel confident there wasn't a missed opportunity for additional benefits and the case worker would feel empowered to provide efficient, rapid, and consistent wrap-around support based on individualized client needs.

Phase 3: Review results of the implementation and consider expanded utilization of consent to community partners

Upon completion of the implementation, the City may wish to identify key community partners to be included in the integrated consent to further develop the case-conferencing approach to client service. The Privacy and Consent Working Group could evaluate and discuss the feasibility of including key community partners in the consent, and determine next steps to move toward a case conferencing approach in which case management is integrated across providers and services to create a seamless client experience.

Priority 2 – Participation Agreements



A. Overview

The province's Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan is divided into two separate periods: The Recovery Period (currently underway); focused on centralizing financial assistance and program integrity, and The Renewal Period (2021-2024); focused on person-centred, supportive client approaches and renewed service delivery. The centralization of financial assistance at the provincial level is intended to create capacity for municipal service managers to focus on becoming experts at life stabilization: understanding people's needs, building trust, guiding people through personalized planning, and helping them navigate the broader system of supports.

As part of the province's maturity model for human service integration, person-centred services that effectively help people move toward their goals is an important design principle in a fully integrated state; defined by the following characteristics related to client outcomes and service plans:

- Local caseworkers are empowered to provide solutions customized to meet individual needs and ambitions, and that services plans encompass a range of interventions that are coordinated and focused on the needs of the client
- The service delivery system customizes services and supports into unique packages that meet client needs while drawing upon practices and process shared across the ecosystem
- Individual service plans reflect the client's unique situations and integrate their private support structures in the community

KPMG facilitated a session with City of Kingston Social Services staff working group to discuss the most critical client challenges that the One Focus Human Services Integration Project could solve, and what changes to the local service delivery model should be prioritized to facilitate person-centred, life stabilization efforts and improve the client experience.

Staff identified the need for an individualized, more prescriptive Participation Agreement (PA) to enable the case manager to effectively provide wrap-around support to the client and provide clients with a detailed action plan and list of community resources customized for the client to thrive. Additionally, staff identified the need for a universally applied Quality of Life Framework, such as an indicator/assessment tool, that could be utilized to determine client acuity and life stabilization needs in a service integrated future state.

Priority 2 – Participation Agreements



Staff reported that the current PA is not effective in communicating the details of a client's specific activities to undertake to move toward their goals of self-sufficiency. The current PA's are generic and lacking detailed information that outline life stabilization supports and referrals that are individualized to the client. In many cases, the standard PA is the only paperwork provided to a client after meeting with their case manager regarding their outcome plan. This is problematic, especially for heavily barriered clients who are unable to synthesize the activities discussed with their case manager into a realistic action plan to move toward their goals. The current PA contains template language referencing conditions of eligibility for receipt of financial assistance instead of a focus on life stabilization initiatives aimed to help address the barriers clients face to employment, independence, and well-being—i.e. housing, mental health, childcare, cultural connections, literacy, etc.

Conversely, the Outcome Plan activities entered into SAMS by the case manager, contain much more detailed information on the specific actions for the client to take toward self sufficiency, identifying particular service providers within the community to support employment readiness activities, recommendations for personal and professional development courses specific to the clients needs, and other community resources for the client to access, but this roadmap is not currently provided to the client.

As the province progresses toward implementation of the Renewal Period in their Social Assistance transformation, the City should consider becoming an early adopter of enhancements to the PA that would generate a supportive and informative first point of contact for clients, providing information to the client specific to their individual needs, with outcomes and measurements that are clear and tangible.

B. Implementation Considerations

The implementation approach for this opportunity involves the following key elements:

Phase 1: Establish staff working group and develop/select a common assessment tool that could be utilized to determine client acuity and life stabilization needs

We recommend the City establish a Client Service Delivery working group to focus on potential enhancements to the current PA. The working group will also consult on the development of Quality of Life Framework, such as an indicator/assessment tool, that could be utilized to determine client acuity and life stabilization needs in a service integrated future state.

Priority 2 – Participation Agreements



As part of the development/selection of a common assessment tool, the City should consider:

- The Ministry currently provides a Self Sufficiency survey which is built into the PA and Outcome Plan that is completed with every client upon intake into social assistance. The self-sufficiency assessment is based on such factors as employment, health, addictions, transportation, domestic violence, education, care-giving responsibilities, and housing.
- The City's Circles program for low-income individuals and families receiving social assistance that are highly motivated to move out of poverty, includes a Life Assessment Tool that evaluates self-sufficiency and ability for the client to progress toward a desired outcome or goal. The Life Assessment tool examines a client's access to food, shelter, transportation, support system, and overall well-being and mental health; with clients rating themselves on a scale of 1-5 from "Surviving" to "Thriving." In addition, Circles 'Leaders' also use the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey to rate their general feelings about themselves.
- The Region of Waterloo, a peer CMSMs interviewed for our jurisdictional review, shared their Quality of Life Framework used to determine client acuity and life stabilization needs, based on such factors as economic well-being, social inclusion and equity, physical and emotional well-being, skills development, and relationships. A copy of their Quality of Life Framework is included in Appendix A.
- Additionally, the Province is currently piloting a common assessment tool (CAT) within regions participating in the Employment Services Transformation initiative as part of their Social Assistance Recovery Period, to determine which clients will be referred to Employment Ontario and guide life stabilization plans. This common assessment tool includes basic client demographic information, skills assessment (language, literacy, numeracy, technology), supports and service needs based on current life circumstances (housing, childcare, transportation, etc.), employment status and history, and employment goals. The assessment tool is used to make a determination on a client's employment readiness, including those clients who may require intensive and ongoing supports to enter the labour market.

The Client Service Delivery working group should evaluate all resources currently available locally, as well as from the province and peer CMSMs, and explore additional quality of life indicators that could be included in the development of a common assessment to determine client acuity and life stabilization needs. We recommend the City align their establishment of an indicator/assessment tool with the assessment tool and Action Plan currently being prototyped in Employment Services Transformation phase of the Social Assistant Renewal and Recovery Plan.

Priority 2 – Participation Agreements



Phase 2: Review alternative Outcome and Action Plans and determine enhancements to current PA

During our One Focus Project working group sessions focused on client needs assessment, staff identified the demand for an individualized, more prescriptive PA to enable the case manager to effectively deliver wrap-around support to the client and provide clients with a detailed action plan and list of community resources and referrals customized for their needs, to be a key success factor in service integration.

As part of the development of an enhanced PA, the City should consider:

- The Action Plan for clients participating in the Learning Earning and Parenting (LEAP) program identifies specific supports and activities for the client to pursue to help them achieve their goals. It includes recommendations from the case worker in focus areas such as transportation, housing, counselling, support groups, emergency relief, and budgeting and finance. Additionally, LEAP clients and their case workers complete a detailed exit strategy that further identifies the supports needed to meet desired client outcomes.
- The City's Circles program, which helps clients transition out of poverty by building intentional relationships across socio-economic classes, identifying barriers that keep people in poverty and implementing innovative solutions to reduce those barriers, includes outcome plans with detailed crisis management and life stabilization strategies and referral sources to social service agencies, faith-based communities, low-income health clinics, etc.

We recommend the City consider the most effective and applicable aspects of the Outcome/Action Plans listed above and incorporate these features into a more focused, enhanced PA. This revised PA would be provided to all clients at their initial PA interview with their case worker and act as an itemized list of various activities to complete, third party referrals, and community resources for the client to access to make meaningful progress toward their desired goals.

Specific items in an enhanced PA could include:

- Information about the social assistance program in which the client is participating (program benefits, monthly reporting requirements, outstanding documents, etc.)
- Case manager's name and contact information
- Client specific goals, activities, and timelines for each

Priority 2 – Participation Agreements



- Referrals to third parties and specific agency contact information
- Additional community resources available to the client, specific to their needs
- An electronic version of the PA could be available on the client's MyBenefits App and could include hyperlinks to agencies websites so clients can directly access more details about the agency's programs, hours of operations, directions, etc.

Phase 3: Pilot the enhanced PA within a small team of case workers with diverse case loads and evaluate benefits and challenges

The intention of this pilot project is to identify and quantify the increase in positive client outcomes that result from use of the enhanced PA and validate the conclusion that providing a more prescriptive, individualized PA to enable the case manager to effectively provide wrap-around support to the client, and provide clients with a detailed action plan and list of community resources and referrals customized for the client to thrive, will achieve intended outcomes.

As part of the pilot project, the City should consider:

- Implementing a staff training program to ensure case workers understand the need for the enhanced PA and develop a consistent approach to launching the enhanced PA with clients among the piloting teams
- Developing a method for data collection to support the evaluation of the pilot project which includes client case studies, key findings, and lessons learned. Results from this evaluation will be an effective resource for the City in support of future human service integration initiatives.
- Aligning enhancements with the anticipated introduction of a new provincial assessment tool and Action Plan as part of the Employment Services Transformation initiative

Phase 4: Review results of pilot program and launch enhanced PA to entire division

Following the completion of the pilot project (a minimum duration of six months is suggested), the City should consider launching the enhanced PA to the entire Ontario Works division. An effective staff training program, coupled with the compelling results from the pilot program evaluation, supported by timely and refined tools and additional resources from the province, should facilitate successful widespread implementation of the enhanced PA.

Priority 3 – Outreach Channels



A. Overview

Evident through our jurisdictional review and in consultations with staff during the Client Focus Working Group, best practice indicates the City should consider expanding physical delivery of human services to additional locations throughout the community. Through the expansion of physical delivery of human services to additional locations, the City will work to establish a ‘no wrong door’ approach, proactively delivering service where the clients are located. Through service integration and process improvement efforts in other opportunity areas, the City’s processes will become refined to support decentralized delivery of human services.

Currently, the City has one primary location to provide physical access all social and human services provided by the Department: 362 Montreal Street. Additional satellite services are provided in Sharbot Lake, and an OW case manager provides services to the integrated Care Hub and One Roof one day a week. The limited number of options for accessing services could leave some clients feeling marginalized due to accessibility challenges i.e. the requirement to take multiple forms of public transit to reach the location of service could be intimidating and challenging for some multi-barriered clients; for clients with limited access to internet and/or transportation, the location of services could leave them isolated, lacking required support. Additionally, the stigma of being identified as an OW or social services recipient from the singular location of service could leave some clients reluctant to seek the help they need.

Increasing service accessibility and providing multiple channels for clients to access services to achieve intended outcomes is an important design principle for a fully integrated state. As part of the province’s maturity model for human service integration, the channels available to access services are defined by the following characteristics:

- Front doors are integrated and omnichannel (for application, intake, initial needs assessment, etc.)
- Technologies incorporating the latest advances in client access channels are utilized, including online, in-person and call centres
- Ease of access and multi channel “front door” enables early intervention within the system
- Community-based organizations serve as portals to services across the system
- Online portals, smart phones, tablets, and kiosks work together seamlessly with traditional service centers and personal referrals
- Services are digitally connected with single points of entry into an ecosystem of community support

Priority 3 – Outreach Channels



- The workforce is enabled to provide relevant services virtually; caseworker mobility is supported digitally
- The government and provider ecosystem is diverse and inclusive; representative of client population diversity
- Remote, mobile and continually innovative workforce generates ever faster and more efficient ways of helping families and individuals achieve their ambitions

The opportunity to expand physical delivery of human services could also include evaluating a mobile service delivery option for clients. Aligning with the ‘no wrong door’ approach, proactively delivering service where the clients are located, the City may wish to consider elements of services that can be delivered to outlying communities and rural areas in addition to the current Sharbot Lake satellite office. As the Consolidated Municipal Services Manager (CMSM) for the County of Frontenac, the City is responsible for the delivery of social assistance to County residents. Frontenac is a region of nearly 4,000 square kilometers and includes the townships of North Frontenac, South Frontenac, Central Frontenac, and Frontenac Islands. The demographic population of Frontenac County consists predominantly of rural areas and small villages, many with limited or inconsistent access to internet and cellular services. Deploying a mobile service delivery approach to these areas could facilitate access to life stabilization supports for County residents within their own communities.

The City of London, included in our jurisdictional review, have demonstrated success in decentralizing their social services delivery approach and integrating services within the community. London began their journey to community service integration in 2013, and now have five main points of services access throughout the city. Various service access points include co-locating within other community hubs such as:

- Community Centres
- Libraries
- Family Resource Centres
- Recreation Centres

London reported that co-locating services in these locations has organically increased community connections for clients and service partners. These connections created a comfort level and increased awareness regarding community resources for both staff and clients, generating additional warm referrals to support client life stabilization needs. Additionally, each site has hoteling locations available to community partners who can attend weekly to meet with clients to provide the wrap-around support these referrals generate, and further enhance client access to community services.

Priority 3 – Outreach Channels



A working group consisting of social services staff, management, and additional city staff from various departments such as facilities, IT, legal, etc. was established to facilitate the decentralization. This working group was consulted on potential locations, physical layout of the space, and client needs, ensuring the new locations would provide for a positive client experience. Evaluations were conducted after each new site opening to determine client satisfaction.

A phased roll-out of the decentralized delivery model was implemented so not all social services staff were required to relocate at the same time. Service delivery staff were provided with the opportunity to indicate their preferred work locations and management worked diligently to ensure staff received their first or second choice.

B. Implementation considerations

The implementation approach for this opportunity involves the following key elements:

Phase 1: Complete initial evaluation of demand for human services physical access locations within the City of Kingston and County of Frontenac

The goal of this phase is evaluate the demand for human services in locations of high client volume and interactions and assess whether these locations are conducive to remote service delivery. We recommend the City establish a working group to identify key community partners and develop a community consultation plan regarding the expansion of physical service access points and mobile service delivery options. The City should work with community partners and service providers to adopt a temporary process for data collection and analysis, which includes tracking (1) the level of volume of client interactions at various locations, and (2) the particular needs of clients in these high volume, high interaction locations.

The intention of this demand evaluation is to provide a short list of locations that are suitable for expanded/remote delivery and validate the conclusion that increasing physical service accessibility and providing multiple channels for clients to access services will achieve intended outcomes.

Phase 2: Determine a short list of opportunities and implement a pilot project

In response to the results of the Phase 1 metrics collected regarding demand based on current client interactions, we suggest the City implement a pilot project for the delivery of these services through other community access locations. Complete data analysis to understand greatest need per location and determine the services most conducive to expanded/remote delivery. Develop a priority ranking system to identify key locations and services that should be chosen for implementation.

Priority 3 – Outreach Channels



As part of the pilot project, the City should consider:

- Assessing the ergonomic layout of these community facilities to contribute towards the efficient delivery of service (e.g. customer flow), appropriate privacy measures and, as required, social distancing.
- Identifying technology requirements for services in expanded service delivery sites to ensure access to appropriate systems (SAMS, OCCMS, Rent Café, etc.)
- Determining appropriate method for mobile deployment, including the extent of required technology, vehicles and other support requirements
- Developing appropriate information and communication plan relating to the expansion of service locations to inform clients and community partners of additional channels to access support
- Developing a data collection approach to support an evaluation of the pilot project.

Phase 3: Review results of pilot program and implement additional locations and services as considered appropriate

Following the completion of the pilot project (a minimum duration of six months is suggested), the City should consider undertaking a formal evaluation of the initiative for the purposes of determining whether ongoing delivery of the services through other physical community locations and mobile delivery is warranted. Additionally, the evaluation could also identify key findings and lessons learned that can be considered by the City in connection with future human service integration initiatives.

Upon completion of the pilot project, the City may wish to identify additional locations for expanded physical service delivery through additional community partners and facilities.

Priority 4 – Adapting Physical Requirements



A. Overview

Arguably, the ongoing pandemic has fundamentally impacted how organizations work, both from the perspective of client interactions as well as back-office administrative functions. For the Department, the pandemic has resulted in major changes to the delivery of services, with a corresponding impact on its physical space requirements:

- In-person attendance has been impacted by infection control issues, with more prescriptive policies concerning movement and interaction of staff and clients;
- Utilization of the MyBenefits App for electronic communications with clients has increased significantly since the start of the pandemic, reducing the need for in-person interactions between Ontario Works clients and staff. In addition to enhancing the overall customer service experience, this has also supported the ability for staff to work from home (initially undertaken as an infection prevention and control measure), reducing the overall occupancy of the Department's facility.
- With the implementation of the Province's electronic data management initiative in the fall of 2021, the level of paper documentation – and the associated physical resources required for storage – is expected to decrease.

This opportunity involves the reevaluation of the physical space and resource demands for the Department and its personnel, including an assessment of:

- The amount of office space required on a go-forward basis, considering the potential continuation of remote working after the end of the pandemic, as well as the basis for allocating office space under a hybrid work model that combines in person and remote attendance by staff;
- Information technology and other requirements necessary to support new models of working;
- Changes to physical layouts for personnel movement and in-person client interactions required as part of infection prevention and control measures (e.g. washroom layouts); and
- The reduction and/or repurposing of space to adjust for increased use of electronic documentation.

To the extent that this reevaluation results in significant renovations to the Department's building areas, the assessment could also potentially include the incorporation of new standards under the Ontario Building Code Act (e.g. the inclusion of wellness rooms).

Priority 4 – Adapting Physical Requirements



B. Implementation considerations

Implementation planning for space requirements does include elements that can be commenced in the short-term:

- If not already completed/underway, the development of a formal policy on staff vaccinations for employees that are planning on working on-site.
- The completion of a facility inventory that provides an understanding of the existing characteristics of the Department's facilities as well as potential shortcomings.
- The undertaking of an employee survey to determine the level of interest in returning to work and, by extension, the physical space and technology requirements. A recent survey undertaken by KPMG (May 2021) indicated that 77% of the 2,003 respondents like a hybrid model that combines in-office and remote working, while 71% believe that a hybrid model should be the standard model for all organizations.
- The development of a functional program/needs assessment for office space that consider factors such as (i) the number and timing of employees working in the office; (ii) necessary infection prevention and control measures (e.g. increased areas to permit social distancing, revisions to washrooms, changes to front-of-house space to ensure appropriate social distancing between staff and clients); (iii) changes to space requirements due to electronic data management initiatives; and (iv) reduced space requirements resulting from the adoption of additional outreach channels. Technical requirements (e.g. installation of air handling and filtering equipment) would be determined as part of requisite design work undertaken in connection with this opportunity.

The decision to proceed with changes to the Department's physical space will ultimately be contingent upon available funding and dependent on the end of the ongoing pandemic, as well as the service delivery expectations mandated by the Province in a post-pandemic context. As such, the timing for this opportunity is unknown at this time. However, the City may wish to consider proceeding with certain aspects of the implementation plan (e.g. facility inventory, employee survey) in order to demonstrate progress on this initiative and demonstrate to staff that their perspectives on the post-pandemic work environment will be considered.

Priority 5 – Organizational Redesign



A. Overview

As part of One Focus, a jurisdictional review of selected service managers was undertaken to identify changes to their organizational structures, including the establishment of integrated positions (i.e. those that cross different human and social services) for aspects of service delivery. The following service managers were included in the jurisdictional review:

- **Oxford County** – Oxford County has established integrated client service worker positions, which are responsible for the delivery of housing and homelessness, Ontario Works and childcare. Under this model, clients interact with a single client service worker regardless of the nature of the service provided. Oxford County has also established two other integrated positions:
 - Program integrity workers (formerly eligibility review officers), who are responsible for undertaking peer reviews of services delivered by the client service workers to maximize supports provided to clients; and
 - Human services clerks that provide administrative support to the client service workers on all programs and services.

As an additional support, Oxford County has established specialized supervisors that are subject matter experts for specific services and provide assistance and advice to all client service workers with respect to their particular area of focus.

- **Region of Waterloo** – The service delivery model for the Region of Waterloo involves integrated positions at the initial client intake (service navigators) and supervisor level, with service-specific case workers responsible for case management and client interactions. Service delivery is provided by co-located multi-disciplinary teams (case workers and integrated supervisors) that are supported by community of practice supervisors that act as subject matter experts and provide support to the case workers and integrated supervisors.
- **Dufferin County** – Dufferin County has adopted a limited approach to integration. While its organizational structure maintains service specific positions at both the manager and community service worker level, it has harmonized job descriptions across the different services and has also integrated within the individual services – for example, housing and homelessness community service workers are responsible for all housing programs (e.g. rent subsidy by-name list, subsidized housing wait list), while Ontario Works community service workers provide both employment and financial support to Ontario Works clients. Dufferin County has also integrated front line customer service (i.e. one-window reception), while also utilizing integrated consents across different services.

Priority 5 – Organizational Redesign



In addition to these service managers, consultation was also held with the City of Peterborough concerning their recent restructuring of Ontario Works, which differed from One Focus due to the fact that it resulted from the Provincial pilot project for employment support services. Unlike the Department, which uses external providers for employment support services, Peterborough was directly involved in the delivery of employment support and as such, experienced a \$1.2 million reduction in funding due to the pilot project. As part of its restructuring and cost reduction strategies, Peterborough established the position of intake and referral worker, an integrated position comprised of former administrative personnel who are responsible for all aspects of client intake, including the determination of eligibility, the completion of applications for supports and referrals to client service workers. We were advised that this integrated position provides more capacity for client service workers to focus on high impact life stabilization supports.

The results of the jurisdictional review demonstrate potential models for integrated service delivery, as well as the associated benefits, including:

- The streamlining of intake processes for clients;
- The development of subject matter experts that provide specific and comprehensive advice and assistance to case managers; and
- The creation of capacity for case managers and supervisors to deliver high impact life stabilization supports by shifting administrative responsibilities to other team members.

This opportunity involves the evaluation of alternative organizational structures that contemplate the creation of integrated positions at the intake, client service worker and/or supervisor level.

B. Implementation considerations

The establishment of a new organizational structure, including realignment of roles and responsibilities, involves a series of worksteps:

- Confirmation of the existing organizational structure, including the development of a clear understanding (e.g. heat map) of roles, responsibilities and the nature of interactions between staff (i.e. client hand-offs)
- Analysis of client data to assess the extent to which the Department's clients utilize different services, with integration activities focused to ensure that the majority of demand for services is captured by the revised organizational structure
- The creation of design principles that will form the basis for evaluating potential options
- The development and evaluation of alternative structures that consider the integration of job functions and positions, including (i) intake; (ii) client supports and caseload management; and/or supervision, leading to the selection of a preferred model.

Priority 5 – Organizational Redesign



Following the selection of a preferred model, implementation activities would then focus on revisions to job descriptions, policies, procedures and other documents/elements to reflect the revised organizational design. As part of these revisions, the City should:

- In conjunction with the City's HR function, review the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement to ensure compliance with the necessary provisions
- Implement consultation with employees (union and non-union) and representatives of the collective bargaining unit to ensure a clear understanding of the revised organizational structure and the rationale for the change. Potential communication strategies could include information presentations, employee surveys and the preparation of FAQs
- Undertake an analysis of potential human resource implications, including rationalization of positions (if relevant), obligations under the collective bargaining agreement and the potential for attrition as a means of reducing staff complement
- Identifying training requirements and developing an appropriately resourced training strategy
- Identifying technology and other resource requirements associated with the delivery of services under the proposed organizational structure

Priority 6 – Operational Efficiencies



A. Overview

KPMG completed a current state assessment of Housing and Social Services operations as part of the Diagnose phase of the Human Services Integration project. The current state assessment is intended to identify areas where the City's current performance is not aligned with its vision and objective for its desired future state, and identify gaps to be addressed through continuous improvement initiatives focused on client service and reducing administrative burden for staff to align with a service integrated future state.

The 2019 review involved process mapping of more than 30 services that are delivered by the City, which identified a range of potential opportunities for enhanced efficiencies and client service interactions. As part of the current review, KPMG worked with more than 40 City staff to review and update these process maps in order to reflect the most recent processes for service delivery, as well as to ensure that the potential opportunities are still relevant and valid.

The 2021 process review focused on identifying the following items:

- Process inefficiencies, which may include duplication of efforts, manual vs. automated processes and the performance of work with nominal value or high administrative burden impacting staff capacity with the goal to reduce administrative burden to create staff capacity to provide high-impact wraparound life stabilization support for clients
- Client service limitations, representing aspects of the City's operations that may adversely impact the client experience or pose a barrier to an integrated and streamlined human services system focused on people, and efficient and effective service delivery with the goal to increase inter-functional collaboration between different functional units within the City's Housing and Social Services.

Based on the process mapping conducted (updates and new processes), it was determined that 36 process efficiency opportunities and 6 client service opportunities identified during the 2019 review were still relevant for implementation. In addition, 51 opportunities were identified with respect to the new processes implemented by the Province, resulting in more than 90 potential opportunities for implementation.

Priority 6 – Operational Efficiencies



B. Implementation Considerations

Step 1: Establish formal process to develop internal capacity for continuous improvement

This opportunity involves the establishment of a formal process and development of capacity for continuous improvement, the intention of which is to continually review and refine the City's processes and service delivery so as to eliminate process waste and inefficiencies, and streamline and enhance client service. As part of an overall continuous improvement framework, the City could consider:

- Establishing a Process Improvement Implementation staff working group to lead the implementation of process improvement initiatives identified during the current state review. Working group participants will become champions for lean continuous improvement and create a progressive implementation plan, implementing improvements that build on each other while prioritizing service integration and administrative efficiency priorities that have been identified as Quick Wins due to their ease of implementation and high benefit.
- Establishing a formal process for staff suggestions for opportunities to increase efficiency and service integration (e.g. standard email address for suggestions);
- Identifying and sharing examples of continuous improvement initiatives identified by staff members as a form of encouraging additional suggestions;
- Linking continuous improvement and service integration to staff recognition programs by establishing a specific category for continuous improvement;
- Undertaking process mapping of additional processes in order to identify and address client service and efficiency constraints;
- Undertaking consultations with other municipalities to identify best practices that could potentially be implemented by the City.
- Training all staff to a baseline knowledge/awareness on Lean continuous improvement methodology.
- Training a combination of key front line and management staff from each division to Lean Six Sigma Yellow or Green Belt level. Based on the department's current staffing levels, we would recommend 5 staff be identified as Lean Champions and trained accordingly.
- In connection with the implementation of a formal process to develop internal capacity for continuous improvement processes, the City may wish to consider the development of an annual workplan that outlines intended areas of focus and specific activities to be undertaken each year to make advancements in this area

Priority 6 – Operational Efficiencies



Step 2: Implement weekly team huddles focused on continuous improvement and service integration

This opportunity involves the adoption of weekly (or as frequent as determined appropriate for the department) team huddles to discuss continuous improvement and service integration initiatives. Weekly team huddles will work to embed continuous improvement and service integration in the City's culture, while providing a key forum to review and continually improve processes based on open discussion and dialogue on a timely basis. The implementation of a weekly team huddle will greatly highlight the importance of service integration and efficiencies to be achieved through a continuous improvement mindset and keep the department focused on the desired future state objectives.

The City should communicate this to departmental managers who will be required to incorporate an element of continuous improvement and service integration discussion on a frequent basis. The City could have central staff in a particular function develop specific agenda items or topics to consider to help ensure consistency across the department.

Step 3: Implement recommended courses of action from current state analysis

In response to the gaps identified between the current and intended future state, this strategy includes a total of 90 potential courses of action that are intended to assist the City in achieving its desired future state in reducing administrative burden for staff and increasing inter-functional collaboration between divisions. The timeframes for full implementation of the recommended courses of action will range from immediate “quick wins” – requiring less than three months for full implementation – to longer term timeframes of up to three years, reflecting the extent of change required and the conditions precedent for implementation.

As summarized below, these courses of action will vary in terms of implementation timeframes, as follows:

- **Immediate implementation** – Representing **Quick Wins**, these courses of action are expected to be implemented within a one to three month timeframe, reflecting the absence of significant resource requirements for realization and/or the potential for an immediate positive impact that will support subsequent actions.
- **Medium-term implementation** – Expected to be implemented within 3 to 18 months, medium-term opportunities will require increased levels of data analysis and/or financial and personnel resource requirements (e.g. investment in technology for expanded online service offerings, collaboration with the province, etc.). In addition, successful implementation of medium-term courses of action may be contingent on other changes identified in the service integration strategy and as such, the timing of implementation reflects the staging of changes.
- **Long-term implementation** - Consisting of the most substantial courses of action, in terms of resource requirements or degree of change.

Specific areas of focus for operating efficiencies have been provided to the Department under separate cover.



One FOCUS

Human Services Integration Project

Proposed Organizational Structure



Organizational Design



Achieving integration of housing and social services requires, among other elements, an organizational design and allocation of staffing resources that facilitates, as much as possible, the delivery of so-called one window service to clients. In addition, upcoming changes to be introduced by the Province in connection with its Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan, both with respect to the transition of employment support services to a third party provider in 2023 and the anticipated uploading of responsibility for the financial support component of Ontario Works in 2024, encourages a review of the organizational structure of the Department in order to position the Department for the new service delivery model and reduced level of Provincial funding. As part of One Focus, the identification and evaluation of potential organizational structures was undertaken to respond to these two considerations.

A. Option Analysis

The development of potential organizational structures for the future delivery of housing and social services reflects a number of considerations, including:

- The current alignment and allocation of roles and responsibilities within the Department;
- The results of the case study analysis which highlighted different approaches to integrated service delivery adopted by other consolidated municipal service managers; and
- Anticipated changes to the delivery of social services to be introduced by Province with respect to financial and employment supports.

Based on these considerations, three different organizational structures were identified for the future delivery of social services by the Department as outlined on the following pages.

Organizational Design



Option 1 – Under this option, the Department would consolidate client intake for all services (Ontario Works, children’s services and housing and homeless programs) into a single functional unit, thereby providing one window service to clients from an intake perspective. Upon completion of the intake process, case management would then be provided by a team of case managers, specifically:

- One case manager that would be responsible for the delivery of Ontario Works, which includes financial support, employment support and life stabilization supports; and
- One case manager that would be responsible for the delivery of other services (children’s services, housing, homelessness, municipal fee assistance program (“MFAP”).

This option would also involve the consolidation of case management supervision responsibilities (i.e. supervisors would be responsible for supporting case managers in the delivery of all services), along with the consolidation of the Department’s training and program integrity/audit functions.

While this option provides a single point-of-contact for clients during the intake stage, it establishes a team of case managers (2) as opposed to a single case manager for ongoing service delivery. The separation of case management responsibilities is intended to accommodate differences in the level of knowledge required for the delivery of the different services, as well as higher caseload levels for Ontario Works case managers, which may preclude the delivery of other services.

Option 2 – Under this option, the Department would establish integrated delivery of intake, case management supervision, training and program integrity/audit functions (similar to Option 1). In addition, this option would also see the establishment of a team approach to case management that differs from Option 1 in that the team would comprise of three case managers:

- A case manager that would be responsible for the delivery of life stabilization supports;
- A case manager responsible for the delivery of Ontario Works financial benefits, focusing exclusively on income reporting and verification;
- A case manager responsible for the delivery of children’s services, housing, homelessness and MFAP.

This option is intended to maximize the resources available to clients for higher impact life stabilization supports by separating this function from other program delivery, while at the same time positioning the Department for the anticipated uploading of the financial component of Ontario Works by separating this function from the delivery of other services.

Organizational Design



Option 3 – While this option is similar to the previous options in that it considers the integration of the Department’s intake, case management supervision, training and program integrity/audit functions, it differs with respect to post-intake case management, which would be delivered by a single case manager responsible for all services (Ontario Works, children’s services, housing, homelessness, MFAP) as opposed to the team approaches considered under Options 1 and 2. This option provides the greatest extent of integration for the Department’s services and provides a single case management point-of-contact for clients after the initial intake process.

A summary of the identified options is provided below.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Client intake	Integrated Intake Function for All Services		
Ontario Works Case Management – Financial Support ¹	Integrated into a Single Case Manager Position	Stand Alone Case Manager	Integrated Into a Single Case Manager Position
Ontario Works Case Management – Life Stabilization Support		Stand Alone Case Manager	
Ontario Works Case Management – Employment Support ²			
Children’s Services Case Management	Integrated into a Single Case Manager Position	Integrated Into a Single Case Manager Position	
Housing and Homelessness Case Management			
Case Management Supervision	Integrated Supervisor Position for All Services		
Training	Integrated Training Function for All Services		
Program Integrity and Audit	Integrated Program Integrity and Audit Function for All Services		

¹ Pending uploading of Ontario Works financial assistance component in 2024.

² Pending transfer of employment support component to service system manager in 2023.

Organizational Design



For the purposes of identifying a preferred organizational structure, each of the options have been evaluated based on five evaluation criteria. For the purposes of the evaluation, each of the criteria was assigned a maximum score that was weighted to reflect the relative importance of each criteria (maximum scores are indicated in brackets).

- Does the option maximize the degree of integration of service delivery to clients, resulting in a more timely and streamlined approach to accessing services?
- Does the option enhance the extent of internal collaboration within the Department, reducing instances of siloing and potential duplication of efforts?
- Does the option maximize the delivery of higher impact life stabilization and other supports?
- Is the extent of change associated with the option easily manageable?
- Does the option align with; and position the Department to adjust to; future changes to social services to be introduced by the Province?

Given the vulnerable nature of the Department's clients and the increasing acuity of need for social assistance clients, the client-facing evaluation criteria (degree of integration for service delivery to clients, maximize delivery of higher impact life stabilization and other supports) were assigned the highest weightings and collectively account for two-thirds of the available maximum score.

The results of the analysis (which are included as Appendix B) indicate that Option 2 represents the preferred organizational model due to its focus on the delivery of life stabilization supports and consistency with impending Provincial changes to social services delivery. With the uploading of financial benefits delivery by the Province in 2024, Option 2 can be considered a transitional model for the Department that facilitates Provincial restructuring of social services and provides the potential of further integration.

¹ Pending uploading of Ontario Works financial assistance component in 2024.

² Pending transfer of employment support component to service system manager in 2023.

Organizational Design



A. Staffing Implications

In connection with the proposed organizational redesign of the Department and aligned with the timing of the transformation of employment support, a reduction in the Department's staffing complement (unionized and non-unionized) is anticipated to produce estimated annual savings of approximately \$600,000.

As noted earlier in our report, the preferred organizational design anticipates the integration of a number of the Department's functions, which will require the realignment of staff, including changes in lines of reporting and responsibilities to reflect the integrated approach to service delivery.

In addition to these realignments, it is important to recognize the associated training needs for Department staff, particularly for those individuals where their roles will be expanded beyond their current area of focus (i.e. specific service) to an integrated delivery model where they will be expected to become proficient across all services. Ensuring an appropriate level of knowledge for these staff could extend beyond training to include the development of frequently asked questions and other technology supports (e.g. internal website with relevant supports and documentation).

B. Proof of Concept Pilot Project

In connection with the preferred organizational structure for housing and social services, the Department may wish to consider the use of a pilot project to assess (1) the effectiveness of the preferred model in meeting the needs of the Department's clients; (2) the level of interest on the part of staff in the separate Ontario Works case management position (intake, financial support, life stabilization support); (3) training requirements associated with the proposed model; and (4) other elements associated with implementation that could be addressed prior to a full-scale transition to the preferred model. Specifically, we suggest that the Department consider the establishment of a team, comprised of (1) a case manager for the delivery of life stabilization supports; (2) a case manager responsible for the administration of Ontario Works financial support; and (3) an integrated case manager responsible for the delivery of children's services, housing, homelessness and MFAP. At the conclusion of the pilot project period (e.g. three months), the Department should consider undertaking a detailed review of outcomes, including benefits and challenges, in order to validate the concept and appropriately plan for future implementation.



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Financial Analysis



Financial Analysis



With the implementation of the Province’s Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan, the Department is expected to experience a 20% reduction in Provincial funding for administration in 2023 as a result of the transformation of employment support services. Based on the budgeted level of Provincial funding in 2021 (\$6.19 million), this would represent a funding reduction of approximately \$1.2 million. It is not yet known what, if any, funding implications may be associated with the other components of the Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan, including when the Province uploads responsibility for the administration of the financial component of Ontario Works.

In order to accommodate the anticipated funding reduction in 2023, the Department anticipates relying on cost savings through the following strategies:

- Staffing reductions for existing staff based on existing caseloads. As noted earlier in our report, these reductions are expected to provide cost savings of approximately \$600,000, representing 50% of the anticipated level of funding reductions in 2023.
- Reductions in the level of corporate support costs. The City currently allocates a total of \$3.38 million in corporate costs to Ontario Works, comprised of:
 - Administrative costs \$1.64 million
 - Information systems and technology costs \$0.86 million
 - Accommodation costs \$0.85 million
 - Equipment and insurance costs \$0.04 million

While the allocation of corporate support costs is subject to negotiation with the City, a 20% reduction in costs (which is equal to the anticipated reduction in Provincial funding for Ontario Works administration) would result in cost savings of approximately \$676,000.

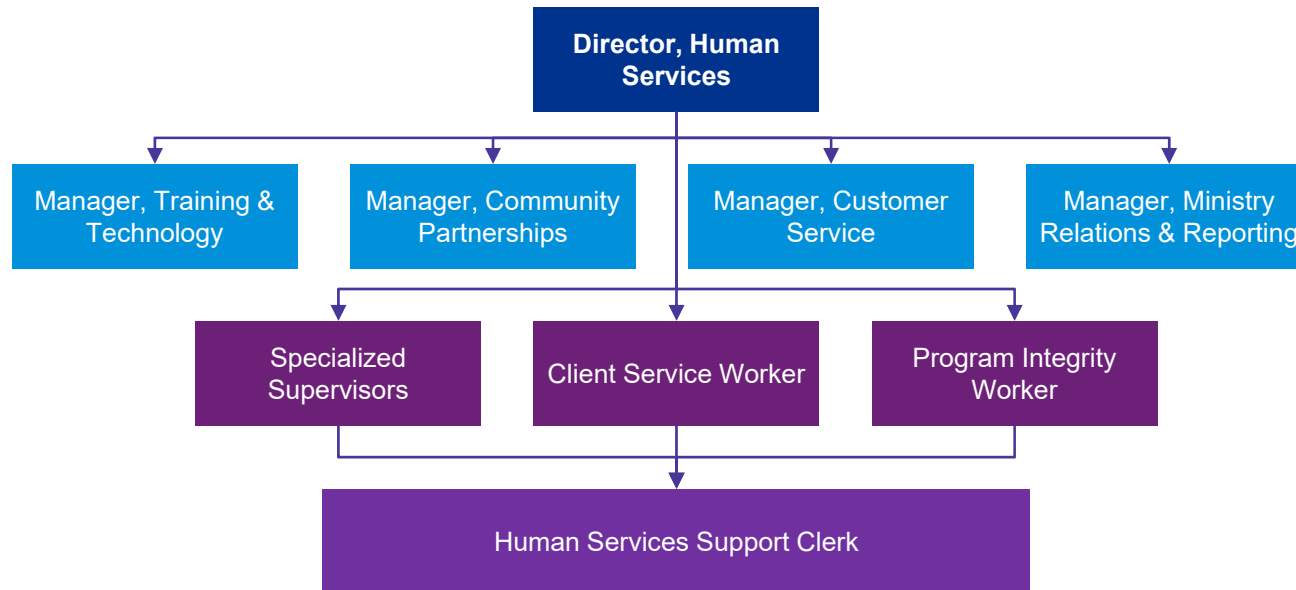


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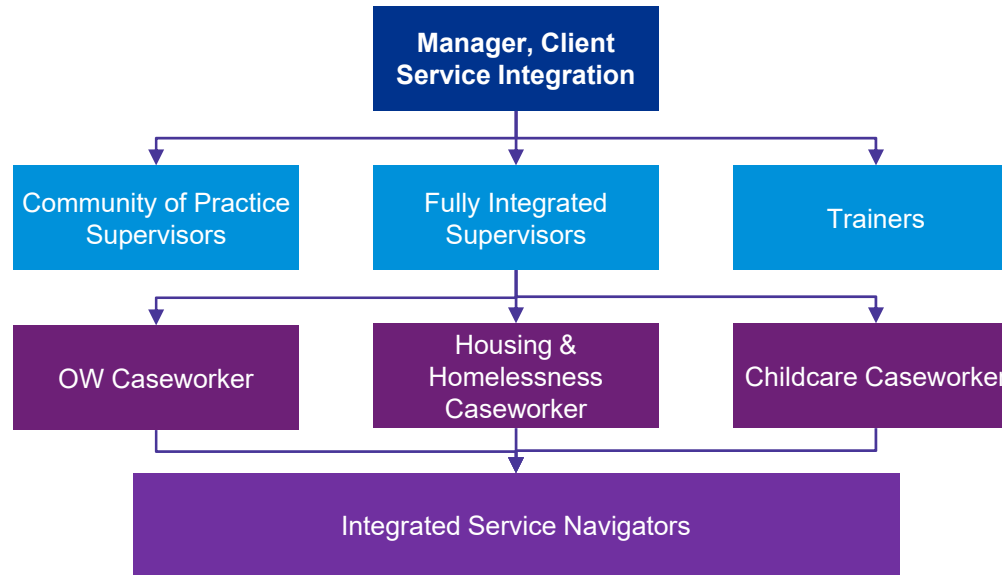
Appendix A Comparator Organizational Structures





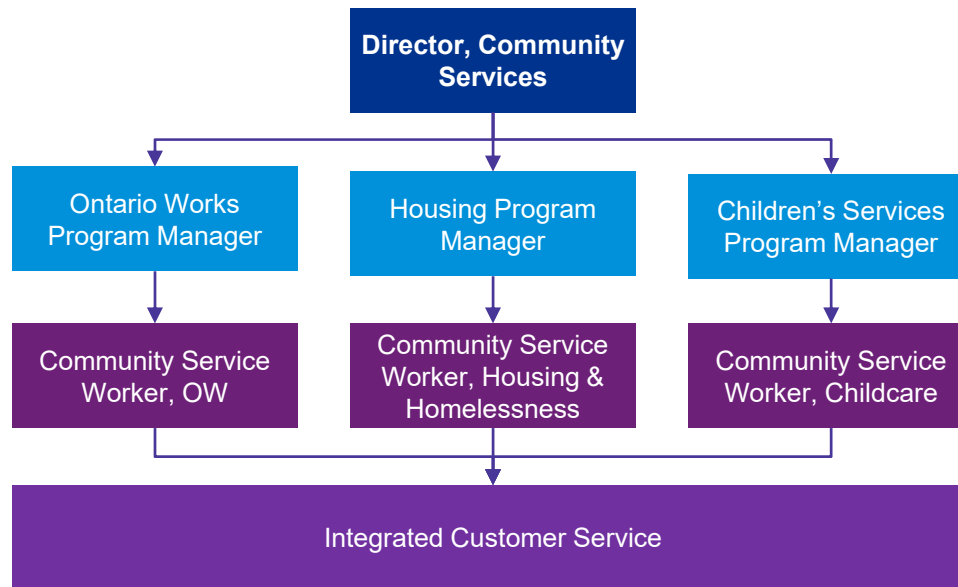
Notes:

- Fully integrated since 2013
- Case Workers support all three programs – Housing & Homelessness, Ontario Works, and Childcare
- Clients are with same Case Worker throughout entire journey
- Eligibility Review Officers became Program Integrity Workers to support all three programs
- Human Services Clerks support all programs and complete all back-end work



Notes:

- Co-located multi-disciplinary integrated teams
- One fully integrated Supervisor supports team of program specific case workers
- Reception was changed to Welcome Spaces and was fully integrated; Receptionist changed to Service Navigator position; Reception position was eliminated
- Service Navigator role was evaluated/graded above a Reception Clerk and below Case Worker which created career path for entry level staff to advance within department
- Teams work in open concept with Supervisors work stations located directly with multi-disciplinary teams
- Community of Practice roles retained as Subject Matter Experts



Notes:

- Harmonized Case Worker job description and pay grade across all programs – now Community Service Worker
- Housing Case Workers are integrated within program i.e. Housing Case Worker supports rent subsidy, by-name list, subsidized housing waitlist, etc.
- OW Case Workers are integrated within program i.e. employment & financial support
- Integrated front line customer service
- Integrated consents
- Not Unionized

Key Success Enablers and Challenges

Key Success Enablers	
Consents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practice evident in all peer CMSMs interviewed identified an effective integrated consent as the single highest priority and key enabling success factor in their journey to service integration. Integrated consents with community partners was also identified as an effective tool to facilitate warm referrals and client case-conferencing and life stabilization supports, however, few peer CMSMs have yet to implement this fully.
Communication and Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication and transparency was identified as a best practice and key success factor in service integration. Building trust with staff and union throughout the process was critical to building momentum and gaining staff support for integration. Communication activities were extensive and completed through numerous formats/mediums – open houses, webinars, presentations, working groups, management meetings, intranet sites, emails, etc. Peer CMSMs ensured communication was thorough throughout all levels of municipal stakeholders - council, city leadership, other city departments, union, staff, etc.
Leadership Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in service integration, and visible and strong leadership support was identified as a key success factor Support from other City departments such as health and safety, facilities, labour relations, talent acquisition, IT, etc. was also noted - service integration required a significant amount of the municipality’s resources for extended periods of time throughout implementation
Staff & Union Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practice evident at all peer CMSMs was staff and union involvement in service integration design and implementation The union was engaged throughout the entire journey and all staff working groups were comprised of a mix of staff and management The Region of Waterloo established staff working groups for Privacy and Consent, Service Philosophy, IT, and Training and each working group consisted of 1/3 management, 2/3 staff participants

Key Success Enablers and Challenges

Key Success Enablers	
<p>Pilot Project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Region of Waterloo indicated that a key success enabler for service integration was their pilot project - expressions of interest were gathered from staff willing to participate on the multi-disciplinary co-located teams and the pilot ran for one year prior to full implementation. ▪ The pilot enabled a period of trial and error, as well as data collection, client surveys and consultations to evaluate efficacy prior to the more widespread launch of integration. Key data points: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Improvements to clients' quality of life 2) Improved processes for clients 3) Increase in staff knowledge and capacity 4) Better service experience for clients 5) Increase in connections between different divisions
<p>Service Integration in Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All peer CMSMS identified integrating access to social assistance services in the community as a best practice to support client life stabilization and wide ranging service integration efforts with community partners. ▪ The City of London has seen significant success, co-locating service access points in community centres, libraries, and at multiple locations throughout the City. ▪ Having alternative locations to access service for clients helps to minimize the stigma and embarrassment many clients feel seeking out social assistance benefits from only one location within the municipality, and fosters greater collaboration with partners to provide wrap-around life stabilization and community connections.

Challenges



Challenges	
<p>Ensuring Housing and Childcare Have a Voice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All participants in the jurisdictional review identified the challenge of balancing the needs and priorities of each program throughout the service integration journey ▪ Ontario Works was the largest program within social services at all municipalities. In order to truly integrate services, the ongoing challenge of ensuring that OW does not drive the development of the new service delivery model and dominate the implementation had to be actively managed
<p>Change Management and People Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All participants in the jurisdictional review identified change management as the biggest challenge to service integration - the County of Dufferin provided training specific to change management to staff and management to help them navigate the associated changes. ▪ Many peer CMSMs took the opportunity to provide long term employees unable or unwilling to adjust to the change with an attractive exit package ▪ Merging three different corporate cultures under one service philosophy was a challenge – both the Region of Waterloo and Oxford County used service integration to bring all programs together to develop a renewed mission and vision and approach to service ▪ The administration of service integration from people management function was challenging – lacking straight line reporting relationships, matrix management, etc. contributed to a lack of clarity of some administrative functions i.e. approving vacation, shift coverage, staff scheduling, etc. at time of implementation for the Region of Waterloo
<p>Learning Curve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff learning new and multiple systems created an extended learning curve – it took 2 years before staff felt confident in their service integrated roles at Oxford County ▪ Specialized training for Supervisors and Managers was overlooked by some peer CMSMs resulting in additional implementation challenges and extended learning curve



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Appendix B Evaluation of Potential Organizational Structures



Option Analysis



Evaluation Criteria	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the option maximize the degree of integration of service delivery to clients, resulting in a more timely and streamlined approach to accessing services? (30 points) 	20	20	30	While all of the options anticipate an integrated intake function as well as the integration of children’s services, housing, homelessness and MFAP under a single case manager, only Option 3 provides a single point of contact for clients, with Options 1 and 2 anticipating a team-based approach to service delivery that involves multiple case managers. Given the potential for duplication in interactions between clients and case managers under Options 1 and 2, these have been rated lower than Option 3.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the option enhance the extent of internal collaboration within the Department, reducing instances of siloing and potential duplication of efforts? (10 points) 	7	5	10	Option 3 anticipates the delivery of all services by a single case manager, which provides for the highest degree of internal integration by eliminating the need for so-called hand-offs between different case managers. While Options 2 and 3 envision service delivery by co-located teams, the involvement of different case managers (two case managers under Option 1, with three case managers involved under Option 2), increases the potential for disparate service delivery, duplication of efforts resulting from hand-offs and lack of coordination, resulting in lower scores for these options.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the option maximize the delivery of higher impact life stabilization and other supports? (30 points) 	20	30	15	Option 2 involves the establishment of a lead case manager for clients that is focused almost exclusively on the delivery of higher impact life stabilization supports, maximizing the benefits to clients. Under Options 1 and 3, case managers would be involved in the delivery of life stabilization supports but would also be required to delivery other services, potentially diverting time away from life stabilization supports to more administrative tasks (e.g. data input, income verification).

Option Analysis



Evaluation Criteria	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the extent of change associated with the option easily manageable? (10 points) 	10	5	0	Option 1 is expected to involve the lowest degree of change for the Department given that (i) Ontario Works case management would not be impacted by the option; and (ii) existing job descriptions for children’s services and housing and homelessness case managers (which would be integrated under this option) are the same. In comparison, Option 2 would involve a higher degree of change by separating the Ontario Works case management function into two components (financial assistance and life stabilization), while Option 3 is expected to result in the greatest degree of change by requiring case managers to deliver all services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the option align with; and position the Department to adjust to; future changes to social services to be introduced by the Province? (10 points) 	0	10	0	Under Option 2, the financial benefit component of Ontario Works would be positioned within a separate case manager position, thereby facilitating the uploading of this activity by the Province by allowing the Department to plan for the eventual transition through attrition. In addition, the transition of employment support services could also be managed through a reduction in the number of lead case managers without impacting the delivery of financial benefits. In comparison, Options 1 and 3 would continue to see all aspects of Ontario Works delivered by case managers, potentially complicating the Department’s response to Province changes by increasing the complexity of segregating these functions in the future.
Total score	57	70	55	



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