

**ABORIGINAL SERVICES LEVEL 12, C3 PRACTICE AUDIT
REPORT**

NIL/TU'O Child and Family Services Society (IVA)

Field Work Completed: April 7, 2006

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ABORIGINAL SERVICES LEVEL 12, C3 PRACTICE AUDIT REPORT

NIL/TU'O Child and Family Services Society (IVA)

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the audit is to improve and support practice regarding child protection, guardianship, family service and resources for children in care. Through a review of a sample of cases, the audit is expected to provide a baseline measure of the current level of practice, confirm good practice, and identify areas where practice requires strengthening. As this is the first audit for the agency, this report should be seen as a platform for improvement.

The specific purposes of the audit are:

- to confirm good practice and further the development of practice;
- to assess and evaluate practice in relation to existing legislation and the Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators (AOPSI);
- to determine the current level of practice across a sample of cases;
- to identify barriers to providing an adequate level of service;
- to assist in identifying training needs;
- to provide information for use in updating and/or amending practice standards or policy.

The audit is being conducted using the Aboriginal Audit Tool which was developed by Aboriginal Services Branch. Audits of delegated agencies providing child protection, guardianship, family services and resources for children in care will be conducted according to a three-year cycle.

2. METHODOLOGY

Field work was conducted from March 30, 2006 to March 31, 2006 and on April 7, 2006 by 1 auditor. The computerized Aboriginal Case Practice Audit Tool (ACPAT) was used to collect the data and generate office summary compliance reports and a compliance report for each file audited. A sample size of 25% for the family service files was obtained. Two child in care files and two resources files were also audited. In all, 16 files were audited. The family service files were randomly selected from a total of 49 open files. Cases were selected to ensure that a cross representation of files from each team member was reviewed. All children in care files and resource files assigned to the agency office code IVA were audited. Although the entire file being audited was reviewed, only the work done by the agency in the last 3 years was audited.

Upon arrival at the agency, the auditor met with the executive director and supervisor to review the audit purpose and process. Numerous requests for a meeting with the staff were made to discuss the audit process, but this meeting did not occur. The auditor was individually introduced to all staff at the agency and the auditor was available to answer any questions from staff that arose during the audit process. Three staff members, a social worker, the supervisor and the executive director of the agency, met with the auditor to discuss office systems, issues and supervision. At the completion of the audit, a meeting was held with the executive director, supervisor and all available staff to discuss the preliminary findings of the audit. At this meeting, the next steps of the audit process were also discussed including the report and the recommendations process.

3. AGENCY OVERVIEW

a) Delegation

NIL/TU'O Child and Family Services Society (NIL/TU'O) is delegated at C3, or Voluntary Services. NIL/TU'O was granted C3 - Voluntary Service delegation in 2001. This level of delegation enables the delegated agency to provide the following services:

- Support services to families;
- Voluntary care agreements;
- Special needs agreements;
- Establishing residential resources for children in care.

b) Demographics

NIL/TU'O provides the services described above to 7 bands. These 7 bands are: Tsawout, Tsartlip, Pauquachin, Pacheedaht, Songhees, Beecher Bay and T'Souke. These bands extend from Sidney to west of Port Renfrew on the southern coast of Vancouver Island. According to the Registered Indian Population by Sex and Residence (INAC March 2006), there are approximately 1,996 registered on reserve band members residing in these 7 communities.

The NIL/TU'O office is currently located on Tsawout Band land in Saanichton. The building is a large building and is able to house all agency staff. There is a large file room and an administrative support area where photocopiers and other office equipment is located. In the basement of the building, there is a large meeting space which is available for large group meetings or for special events. Although the building is in a convenient location for staff and other professionals, close to Highway 17 and on a bus route, it is not located near any other service providers.

c) Professional Staff Complement

NIL/TU'O has an executive director, one social worker supervisor, and six social workers. The agency also employs a family support supervisor and nine family support

workers. Five of the six social workers have a generalized caseload, while one social worker carries a caseload of family care home providers. Except for the resource social worker, the social workers are assigned caseloads based on geographic communities. All of the social workers have specific days assigned to them to provide intake for the agency.

There is also four administrative support staff at the agency. NIL/TU'O is in the process of hiring a receptionist as there has recently been a reclassification of one of the current administrative staff. One of the administrative support staff will now be providing information systems support to the agency leaving a vacancy for another administrative support person. This will increase the number of administrative support from four to five.

NIL/TU'O uses the Tribes system for their case management and documentation. Prior to December 2005, the agency had 'read only' access to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) Management Information System (MIS). As a result of this, the agency was not entering their family service files on MIS. The agency now has the ability to enter file information onto MIS and has begun to enter their files as required. Staff at NIL/TU'O struggle with MIS, but are looking forward to planned MIS training and hope this will help to build their confidence in using MIS. The agency uses both Tribes and MIS and are anxiously waiting for the development of an interface system which will assist in limiting the amount of data entry they are required to do.

Over the last year at NIL/TU'O, the social work positions have stabilized after a time when approximately 6 people left the organization. These individuals left for a variety of reasons including a move from the community, new job opportunities and a . There was also a change in executive directors as the previous executive director accepted a temporary position outside the agency. The current executive director has been in the position on an acting basis since December 2005 and is expected to remain in the position until the end of June 2006. The acting executive director was hired from within the organization. The supervisor at the agency has been the supervisor for the last two years. There are currently no social work vacancies at NIL/TU'O and there is no staff person absent from work due to a personal leave. At the time of the audit, one social work staff person was attending the Caring for First Nations Aboriginal Social Work training program.

As NIL/TU'O is currently delegated at C3 Voluntary Services, much of their work involves children and youth in continuing care of the MCFD offices in the Victoria and Sooke region. NIL/TU'O provides culturally sensitive services to children and youth who are in care of MCFD as well as to the children and families in the communities served by NIL/TU'O. The MCFD offices have recently re-organized to develop aboriginal service teams which will serve aboriginal children and families in the areas that NIL/TU'O also serves. As NIL/TU'O will now be dealing with only 2 or 3 specific MCFD offices, staff at the agency is hopeful that this re-organization will assist in enhancing their relationship with MCFD.

d) Supervision/Consultation

There is a close working relationship between all team members at NIL/TU'O. The executive director and supervisor have an open door policy and are very accessible to staff. Team meetings are held regularly, at which time policy, issues arising and cases are discussed. There was a time when the relationship between the supervisor and the team was not as positive as it is now. The supervisor has been making a concerted effort to have regular team meetings in order to create a better sense of team amongst staff at the agency. The supervisor has also been working to increase the relationship with MCFD staff by holding liaison meetings with local MCFD supervisors. This has helped to increase the relationship with MCFD, as well as create unity amongst staff at NIL/TU'O.

4. STRENGTHS

The auditor identified several strengths at the agency and of the agency's practice over the course of the audit.

- Commitment of staff – Agency staff are very committed to serving their clients and community.
- Knowledge of community – The staff are very knowledgeable of the communities they serve and are aware of services available in/to the communities.
- Good organizational structure – NIL/TU'O has a good organizational structure with clarity of roles and everyone working in an efficient manner.
- Organization of physical files - The physical files were in good order with the documents being grouped into sections, in chronological order.
- Support staff located in agency – Family Support Workers and Social Workers are housed in the same physical location. This helps to ensure that a good match is made when a child or family is referred to a support worker by the social worker.
- Focus on traditions – the agency focuses on the family and traditional aboriginal practices when supporting children and families.

5. BARRIERS TO SERVICE

- Geographic area - A number of the bands are located some distance from the NIL/TU'O office in Saanichton. This requires workers to regularly travel out to their assigned communities in order to connect with their families. Considerable travel time is required to service these bands.
- Safety – Many workers must travel to different parts of the Victoria/Sooke area in order to visit their clients and other service providers. These workers often travel alone leaving them vulnerable to unexpected situations which may arise i.e. weather, violent client, etc.
- Lack of resources – There is a lack of foster homes which are open to the agency.

Many homes which are opened to the agency are opened on a restricted care home basis and close once the child has been returned to his/her parent. The agency is currently working on recruiting more foster homes to the agency.

- Relationship with MCFD – There is conflicting reports as to the nature of the relationship with MCFD. The relationship has been described as being quite positive to needing work. This may indicate that the nature of the relationship may depend on the individuals involved. This may also be an indicator that the nature of the work being done by the agency, i.e. family support, foster home study, advocacy, affects the relationship between the two organizations.

6. IDENTIFIED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- Knowledge base of staff;
- Family service files
- Signed agreements by youth and parents;
- Recordings

The main issue identified as a result of the audit was that NIL/TU'O has not been registering their family service files. Although the agency was granted full access to MIS in December 2005, family service files remained unregistered on MIS since that time. It is clear that NIL/TU'O provides a great service to the community and to its' band members, but this work is not being accurately reflected in the MIS electronic system. As a result of this practice, not only is the work of the agency not being captured on MIS, but the steps that families are taking to address their issues is also not being captured. This could be a major issue for a family if a future protection concern is reported to MCFD. A prior contact check of MIS would show that the family has not accessed services through NIL/TU'O and this could affect the future provision of services to the family, as well as the relationship between the family and the agency.

As a result of the above identified concern, this auditor has concerns over the knowledge base of both the current acting executive director and supervisor of NIL/TU'O. Both individuals have had no previous experience in either role as executive director or supervisor. Over time, both individuals have been gaining invaluable experience in their respective roles, but this lack of previous experience may create complexities for the agency as they increase their level of delegation and responsibility. The executive director and supervisor are eager to learn, but the agency appears to be disconnected from other delegated agencies and local MCFD offices, limiting the ability of NIL/TU'O to increase their capacity.

For the most part, the documentation on the resource files, child service files and family service files was appropriate. The two main issues regarding the documentation on the family service files were a lack of recordings and a lack of agreements on file. Often the family service files were missing one of the following: opening recording; transferring recording; review recording; or closing recording. While agreements could usually be found on file, these agreements were not always signed by all the required parties,

specifically by both parents and/or the youth where applicable.

7. COMPLIANCE TO THE THREE PROGRAMS AUDITED

One auditor audited the Child Service, Family Service, and Resource files at NIL/TU'O. The 'not applicable' scores were not included in the total.

A) COMPLIANCE TO CHILD SERVICE PRACTICE

Two (2) child service files were audited. When the auditor attended to the NIL/TU'O office, there was only one child service file open. The second file had been recently closed, March 30 2006. Overall compliance to the child service standards was 66.7%.

Although NIL/TU'O has several other child service files open on their Tribes case management system, these files are not files for children in care of the agency. A MIS review of these files showed that these are children in care of MCFD. The children in care files open to NIL/TU'O on their Tribes system are records of support services being provided to those children. As these children are not in care of NIL/TU'O, these files could not be audited according to AOPSI.

The two files were audited for compliance to the Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators, Level 12 or C3 child service including, but not limited to:

- The quality and adequacy of the plan of care;
- The frequency and adequacy of the care plan review;
- The level of contact with the child;
- Placement stability and deciding when and where to move a child;
- The rights of children in care;
- Initial and ongoing medical and dental care for children in care;
- The level of file documentation;
- The degree of stability and continuity provided to the child while in care;
- Informing child and caregiver of appropriate discipline policy.

The following provides a breakdown of the compliance ratings:

1. **Standard 22: The rights of children in care** (AOPSI Standard 23 Level 12) – no files compliant.
2. **Standard 23: Process for determining the needs of the child** (AOPSI Standard 24 Level 12) – 100% compliance.
3. **Standard 24: Biographical information and family history** (AOPSI Standard 26 Level 12) – 100% compliance.

4. **Standard 25: Development of the comprehensive plan of care (AOPSI Standard 3 Level 13)** – 100% compliance.
5. **Standard 26: Monitoring of the child's plan of care (AOPSI Standard 27-28 Level 12)** – 100% compliance.
6. **Standard 27: Informing the child and caregiver about appropriate discipline standards (AOPSI Standard 30 Level 12)** – 100% non compliant.
7. **Standard 28: Deciding where to place a child (AOPSI Standard 31 Level 12)** – 100% compliant; 1 file not applicable.
8. **Standard 29: Deciding to move the child in care (AOPSI Standard 32 Level 12)** - 100% compliant; 1 file not applicable.
9. **Standard 30: Planning a move for a child (AOPSI Standard 33 Level 12)** - 100% compliant; 1 file not applicable.
10. **Standard 31: Reportable circumstances (AOPSI Standard 25 Level 12)** – no files applicable.
11. **Standard 32: When a child or youth is missing, lost or runaway (AOPSI Standard 29 Level 12)** – no files applicable.
12. **Standard 33: Providing initial and ongoing medical and dental care for a child in care (AOPSI Standard 36 Level 12)** – 50% (1 file) compliant.
13. **Standard 34: The social worker's relationship and contact with a child in care (AOPSI Standard 37 Level 12)** - 50% (1 file) compliant.
14. **Standard 35: Interviewing the child about his or her care experience (AOPSI Standard 34 Level 12)** – 50% (1 file) non-compliant; 1 file not applicable.
15. **Standard 36: Case transfer (AOPSI Standard 39 Level 12)** – no files applicable.
16. **Standard 37: File closure (AOPSI Standard 40 Level 12)** – 50% compliant (1 file); 1 file not applicable.

B) COMPLIANCE TO FAMILY SERVICE PRACTICE

Twelve (12) family service files were audited. There were a total of 49 open family services files. Overall compliance to the family service standards was 71.7%. The files were audited for compliance to the Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators, Level 12 or C3 family service including, but not limited to:

- Information and referral for service;
- Supervisors approval regarding voluntary service;
- Family Service Plan and components for support;
- Review of Family Service plan;
- Support Service agreements with families;
- Voluntary and Special Need Agreement;
- File documentation.

The following provides a breakdown of the compliance ratings:

1. **Standard 1-3: Receiving requests for service** (AOPSI Standard 1-3 Level 12) – 92% compliant (11 files).
2. **Standard 4: Information and referral for services** (AOPSI Standard 4 Level 12) – 100% compliant (12 files).
3. **Standard 5: Interagency coordination** (AOPSI Standard 5 Level 12) – 13% compliant (1 file); 63% non-compliant due to factors beyond control of worker or supervisor (5 files); 25% non-compliant (2 files); 4 files not applicable.
4. **Standard 6: Supervisory approval regarding voluntary services** (AOPSI Standard 6 Level 12) - 100% compliant (12 files).
5. **Standard 7: Family service plan rationale and components for support services, voluntary care, and special needs agreements** (AOPSI Standard 7 Level 12) – 92% compliant (11 files).
6. **Standard 8: Support service agreements with families** (AOPSI Standard 8 Level 12) -50% compliant (2 files); 17% non-compliant due to factors beyond control of worker or supervisor (2 files); 33% non-compliant (4 files).
7. **Standard 9: Voluntary care agreements** (AOPSI Standard 10 Level 12) – 100% non-compliant (2 files); 10 files not applicable.
8. **Standard 10: Special needs agreements** (AOPSI Standard 11 Level 12) – no files applicable.
9. **Standard 11: File documentation** (AOPSI Standard 12 Level 12) - 42% compliant (5 files); 8% non-compliant due to factors beyond control of worker or supervisor (1 file); 50% non-compliant (6 files).
10. **Standard 12: Review of the family service plan** (AOPSI Standard 13 Level 12) – 89% compliant (8 files); 11% non-compliant (1 file); 3 files not applicable.
11. **Standard 38: Children with special needs** (AOPSI Standard 38 Level 12) - no

files applicable.

C) COMPLIANCE TO RESOURCE FILE PRACTICE

Two (2) resource files were audited. There were a total of two open resource files assigned to the agency. Although the agency had ten other resource files open on their Tribes case management system, these files were not files which were assigned to the agency. A MIS review of these files showed that most of these resource files were open (or closed) with a MCFD office. As a result, these resource files were not audited.

Overall compliance to the resource standards was 77.8%. The files were audited for compliance to the Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators, Level 12 or C3 resources including, but not limited to:

- Application and orientation of caregiver;
 - Homestudy of caregiver;
 - Training of caregiver;
 - Signed Agreement with caregiver;
 - Providing caregiver with written information regarding child;
 - Monitoring and reviewing homes;
 - Investigating allegations of abuse or neglect of child in care in family care home;
 - Quality of Care review of a family care home;
 - Closure of family care home.
1. **Standard 13: Application and orientation** (AOPSI Standard 14 Level 12) – 100% compliant (2 files).
 2. **Standard 14: Homestudy** (AOPSI Standard 15 Level 12) - 50% compliant (1 file).
 3. **Standard 15: Training of caregivers** (AOPSI Standard 16 Level 12) -100% compliant (2 files).
 4. **Standard 16: Signed agreement with caregivers** (AOPSI Standard 17 Level 12) - 100% compliant (2 files).
 5. **Standard 17: Providing information on the child** (AOPSI Standard 18 Level 12) – no files applicable.
 6. **Standard 18: Monitoring and reviewing homes** (AOPSI Standard 19 Level 12) - 100% non-compliant (1 file); 1 file not applicable.
 7. **Standard 19: Investigating allegations of abuse or neglect of children in care in family care homes** (AOPSI Standard 20 Level 12) - no files applicable.
 8. **Standard 20: Quality of care review of a family care home** (AOPSI Standard 21

Level 12) - no files applicable.

9. **Standard 21: Closure of the family care home** (AOPSI Standard 22 Level 12) – no files applicable.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Present: Dawn Frank, Acting Executive Director, NIL/TU’O Child and Family Services Society
Angie Underwood, Clinical Supervisor, NIL/TU’O Child and Family Services Society
Dawn Wightman, Practice Analyst, Aboriginal Services Branch
Denise Connell, Practice Analyst (Auditor), Aboriginal Services Branch

Date: July 25, 2006

The following recommendations were developed in consultation with NIL/TU’O Child and Family Services Society, and MCFD Aboriginal Services Branch. A written response to the audit report will be provided within 30 days to MCFD Aboriginal Services Branch.

1. NIL/TU’O Child and Family Services Society with assistance from MCFD Aboriginal Services Branch will develop practice guidelines to assist NIL/TU’O in managing their roles and responsibilities when sharing case file responsibilities with MCFD.
2. MCFD Aboriginal Services Branch will ensure that there is a process for communication between MCFD Aboriginal Services Branch, MCFD regional offices and NIL/TU’O Child and Family Services Society.

Julie Dawson
Director, Aboriginal Services Branch
Ministry of Children & Family
Development

Dawn Frank
Acting Executive Director
NIL/TU’O Child & Family Services
Society

APPENDIX 1: AGENCY AUDIT COMPLIANCE REPORTS

