



Disability Rights Coalition of Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia Disability Rights are Human Rights

Web: www.disabilityrightscoalitionns.ca

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“Expert Monitor Finds Province’s Remedy Implementation to be ‘Gaining Traction’ but with Significant Work Still to Do”

On August 1st, Dr. Michael Prince, the independent Expert Monitor from the University of Victoria, released his Year Two [Annual Report](#) on the five-year Remedy transformation.

The independent Monitor’s role is to assess whether the Province is meeting its legal obligations under the Human Rights Remedy. The Remedy requires the Province to end the systemic discrimination against persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia in accessing community-based supports under the Province’s Disability Support Program (‘DSP’). Under the Remedy, the Monitor must also evaluate the Province’s progress in complying with the five-year timeframe for completion of the Remedy.

Overall Assessment

The Monitor’s overall assessment is that, in Year 2, the Province shows that it is “gaining traction” and that there are “notable examples of building capacity”. This includes important steps such as filling key leadership positions and advancing staff training. However, the Monitor also notes that, given the complexity and scale of the work, there are “challenges and notable delays in delivering new programs and services” ([page 5](#)). One concern is a 12% increase in young adults being placed in long term care facilities – something the Monitor describes as “unnecessary institutionalization” ([page 47](#)) and contrary to the Province’s obligations under the Remedy.

The Monitor's recommendations for Year 3 and beyond are essential to build on the progress made so far and keep moving the Human Rights Remedy forward.

Embedding Human Rights Principles and Practices in Government Policy

The Monitor confirmed that, as part of the Remedy, the Province must revise its DSP Policies. These updates must not only use a human rights-based approach, but also clearly state that all persons with disabilities who need support to live in the community will get it as an entitlement. Dr. Prince says that all legal responsibilities -- for both people applying for support and government officials -- should be clearly written in public documents” ([page 52](#)). He also says more changes are needed in the DSP policy manuals, especially around who is eligible for support ([page 30](#)).

When the Remedy was being negotiated, the DRC made sure that these important protections would be included in the DSP Policy. This was meant to support the dignity of persons with disabilities and their families, and to make the system more accountable by creating clear rights to assistance.

Dr. Prince found that the Province has not made progress on strengthening these rights in DSP Policy. He also said this work “appears stalled on this foundational issue” which is key to ending systemic discrimination and implementing the Human Rights Remedy.” ([page 26](#))

Interdepartmental Relationships

In his Report, the Monitor repeated an important message: the Remedy needs a ‘whole of government’ approach. He said, “Effective interdepartmental working relations are essential to support individuals with complex care needs” ([page 42](#)).

He explained that senior leaders, like deputy ministers and other senior public servants at the Remedy Roundtable, are expected to lead this work. Efforts in areas such as mental health and addictions, and multidisciplinary outreach teams are not only important for the Remedy – they are also key parts of the government’s overall agenda on health care and the Premier’s historic apology to people with disabilities. “*Making the Remedy a major policy priority requires sustained strategic involvement by key Cabinet ministers and the Premier’s Office.*” ([page 46](#))

The Monitor said that failure to work together in this way is a major reason why the Province received only rated a “slight” rating for how well it is meeting these obligations.

The Expert Monitor’s Conclusions

In his Report, the Monitor repeatedly highlighted the Premier’s leadership delivering a historic apology in 2023 to people with disabilities on behalf of the Province. He called it “an ongoing standard for governmental leadership and public accountability” ([page 19](#)).

Because the Remedy requires urgent and coordinated action from multiple government departments, the Monitor said strong leadership from the Premier’s office is essential. He emphasized the need for “sustained attention by the government executive” to make sure the Remedy stays a top policy priority. ([page 51](#))

The DRC agrees and urges the Premier to revisit the Remedy and reaffirm the [promise he made in November 2023](#):

“To do this, we need to make significant changes across the Provincial government, changes which followed the direction of the human rights remedy. I commit to you today that we will do this.”

Vicky Levack, DRC spokesperson, who was present when Premier Houston made his historic apology, had this to say after reviewing the Expert Monitor’s Report: “The Report makes clear that we need to remain vigilant around issues of DSP eligibility so that the fundamental entitlement protections that we worked to build into the Remedy get fully incorporated into DSP Policy. Also, we urge the Premier’s office to engage with those recommendations in the Monitor’s report which call upon him to give direction and a sense of urgency to those

Departments which appear to have failed to give the proper priority to their obligations under the Remedy.”

Beyond Compliance: Collaboration and Transparency

The DRC wants to keep working with the Province in a positive and productive way and looks forward to more opportunities for meaningful engagement and collaboration, as mentioned in the Monitor’s report (pages 11, 39). The DRC remains a committed partner, ready to share perspectives, find solutions together, and help build the trust needed to end systemic discrimination for persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia (page 24).

Looking ahead, it’s especially important to understand how these changes are affecting people. As the Monitor points out, it is essential to listen to “...the voices of individuals with disabilities, their families and informal support networks, and the many people responsible for carrying out the Remedy” (page 10). This means encouraging local, grassroots involvement and learning how new roles – like Regional Advisory Councils, Regional Hub Managers and Community Living Facilitators – are building stronger supports for life in community.

Kim Long, the DRC’s Vice-Chair stated: “We encourage individuals, caregivers, disability support workers, service providers, and all stakeholders to share their insights and feedback with the DRC and the Province as they experience the changes related to the Remedy transformation. The ultimate success of the Remedy will not be compliance alone, as the Monitor points out, but rather in the ‘outcome and actual effects on persons with disabilities’ in accessing the supports and services that are their fundamental human right.”

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