

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Social Workers Urge the N.S. Government to Increase Supports for Vulnerable Children and Youth

KJIPIKTUK (HALIFAX, NS) – The Nova Scotia College of Social Workers (NSCSW) is urging the N.S. government to invest in supports to strengthen family life for vulnerable children and youth in **their submission to Budget Talks 2018**.

Applications to the Family Division of the provincial court under the Child and Family Services Act **increased by 8%** following the transformation to the Child Youth and Family Supports (CYFS) Division. Overall applications were decreasing prior to the transformation of the Child Youth and Family Supports (CYFS) Division.

Year	Applications Filed	Percentage Change
2013	923	
2014	915	-1%
2015	913	0%
2016	858	-6%
2017	928	8%

*Information received from a FOIPOP request*

Similar information produced by Nova Scotia legal Aid indicates that there were more than 200 court applications involving the minister of Community Services filed in the Family Division of the Supreme Court in Halifax in 2017.

The former Minister of Community Services Joanne Bernard stated that the changes were needed to keep Nova Scotian children in their homes and to provide support before a family is in crisis.

“The data shows an 8 % increase in applications to the Family Division of the provincial court which indicates that the CYFS Division is moving in the opposite direction. They’re using more intrusive interventions more often, which was not the intent of the amendment act or overall transformation,” says the NSCSW Registrar/Executive Director Alec Stratford.

The current service delivery for the CYFS is compromised by a lack of adequate system resources to accommodate the demands of the amended Child and Family Services Act. Front line social workers are going above and beyond their duties to try and hold this system together. This has increased social worker staff burnout and challenges how essential services for vulnerable Nova Scotians are delivered.

“Our province consistently fails to truly understand the structural issues that impact child and youth welfare,” explains Stratford.

“The additional stressors of income and food insecurity, societal colonial and racist biases, and our continued lack of understanding of trauma profoundly impacts the safety of children and youth. These stressors become more complex through increasing inequality. This leaves the concerns of the most vulnerable citizens to go unnoticed. This erodes trust, increases anxiety and illness which has a lasting impact on a range of social issues.”

The Nova Scotia Government has a responsibility to our children and youth and must ensure the atrocities of Canada’s colonial and racist past are not repeated. They need to invest wisely to keep vulnerable children and youth in their homes and communities.

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**About us:** The Nova Scotia College of Social Workers (NSCSW) serves and protects Nova Scotians by effectively regulating the profession of social work. We work in solidarity with Nova Scotians to advocate for policies that improve social conditions, challenge injustice and value diversity.

**For more information and media inquiries contact:**

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