

Central Foster Care Focus Group  
Virtual Meeting  
July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Meeting Minutes

**PRESENT:**

Federation Staff:

Gary Landry, *Executive Director*  
Jill Martin, *Foster Allegation & Support Social Worker*  
Shirley Howard, *Coordinator of Training*

Department of Community Services:

Margaret MacMillan, *Foster Care Coordinator*  
Cheryl Chandanie-Noylander, *Service Delivery Manager*  
Heather Kearney, *Director of Service Delivery, Central Region*  
Shannon MacMichael, *Director of Service Delivery (CAIT, PART & Disclosure Program)*  
Chelsea Bent, *CIC Supervisor*

Foster Caregivers:

Rob Richardson, *Western FFFNS Board Rep & Board Chair*  
Allie Pitre, *Central FFFNS Board Rep*  
Taryn Haynes, *Hub Home*  
Ann Jennex-Roberts, *Central FFFNS Board Rep & Association President*

Regrets:

Shuana Clark, *A/Director of Placement Services*  
Sabah Randell & Mikisha Johnston, *P&EI Specialists*  
Susan Pace, *Foster Care Supervisor*  
Heather Carrington, *CIC Supervisor*  
Jennifer Skinner, *Regional Resources Supervisor*  
Georgeina MacKinnon, *Director of Foster Care Redesign*  
Mairi MacLean, *Coordinator of Foster Care Redesign*  
Maggie Ellis, *Access and Transportation Supervisor*  
Nancy Baker, *Child and Family Wellbeing Specialist*  
Mandy Levine, *FOTS and Assessment Supervisor*

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1. Welcome and Introductions

Meeting Chairs – Gary Landry & Margaret MacMillan  
Minute Taker – Jill Martin

## 2. FFFNS Updates

- Gary thanked those who were able to attend the AGM this year in Sydney; next year is being hosted by the Western region from May 30<sup>th</sup>- June 1<sup>st</sup>
- Launch of Foster Family Appreciation week this year will be in Port Hawkesbury on Oct 20<sup>th</sup>
- The Federation's Spring newsletter went out a couple of weeks ago
- Ambassador program at the Federation will hopefully begin this Fall
- Please keep an eye out for "Did you Know" emails from the board, which contain important/timely information and updates

## 3. Training (FFFNS) Update:

- The Fall schedule for Federation training will be coming out in August
- The Revamped Sensitivity program (now one day) will be rolled out gradually, beginning this Fall
- NVCi 2-day basic and 1-day refreshers will be happening around the region, as usual
- A blended model for the NVCi refresher will begin this Fall, with 3 hours being completed online by participants, followed by 3 hours in-person

## 4. Allegation Support

- Program operating as usual throughout the province
- The 2 CAIT social workers complete all foster home and adoption probation investigations, generally in a much shorter timeline than prior to CAIT launching
- Jessica Ali from CAIT attended the Federation AGM in Sydney on the Friday evening
- Jill attended pre-service throughout the province this Spring to speak about the Federation and allegations

## 5. Child & Family Wellbeing Updates

- Margaret provided some updates on behalf of DCS. The delivery of FOTS is under review as part of Redesign to ensure each region is delivering necessary and supportive services. It may be that a referral-based design is no longer the best fit.
- DCS is moving ahead with the final phase of foster care design, which includes a focus on recruitment and retention. There has been a needs assessment completed to determine who we most need to recruit to meet the needs of children in care, a large media campaign, and a review of the full approval process from the point of first contact through to final approval.
- Emergency receiving homes for foster care placement will be rolled out, beginning this Fall/Winter, in phases similar to the constellation rollout.

- The Fall PRIDE training schedule will be coming out a bit earlier this year as there is a need to offer more of Module 6 and early registration is required.

#### 6. FOTS

- FOTS supervisor was not able to attend, however, Cheryl provided a brief update. One of the FOTS workers (Suzanne Pothier or Lorelle Baxter) have been assigned to each of the constellations, which seems to be working quite well in this region.

#### 7. Caregiver Updates

- Taryn reported that the Mockingbird model has been positive from her perspective. Their constellation sees each other frequently and are getting along well. Ann echoed this as she reported her constellation is doing well and she is really enjoying this new model. Allie stated that she feels it is mostly positive, but that clarification is still needed (such a memo) regarding respite. Margaret let the group know that correspondence is being drafted as there has been confusion on this topic.

#### 8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

- There have been discussions in other regions and between Gary and Margaret regarding the best format for the focus meetings. The plan is to try a hybrid model in the Fall to see if that increases caregiver attendance as some would really like to return to meeting in person but virtual is much simpler for others.
- Dates will be sent out soon so that everyone has lots of notice to plan their schedule. The plan is to meet in November to avoid appreciation events in October but before winter driving is a concern.

*Minutes taken by Jill Martin*