

December 12, 2019

Submission to: The Special Commission on the Rights of the Child and Youth Protection

Submitted by: The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN)

A French translation of this document will follow.

Une traduction en français de ce document suivra.

- QCGN is aware of anecdotal reports of members of the English-speaking Community encountering difficulty accessing first line child and family services, and Youth Protection (YP) services, in English, especially in regions outside Montreal;
- It is known that if families cannot access first line interventions and assistance early in the development of individual child/youth psychosocial difficulties and of parental difficulties, some of these problems will intensify to the point of requiring YP intervention, or possibly fall under the Youth Criminal Justice Act if the youth's behaviour is judged criminal;
- In cases of English-speaking youth referred for placement from other regions to the Batshaw programs of CIUSSS Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, workers sometimes have the impression no or limited intervention occurred until a YP intervention was necessary;
- Cases referred to Batshaw programs are supposed to be supported by inter-organizational collaboration comprised of intervention with the youth at Batshaw, and intervention with the family in the referring region. In practice the family intervention is often lacking, which may compromise the results of interventions at Batshaw during and after placement;
- As an example, 2015 data reported by the Direction de la Santé Publique in Estrie documented an under-representation of English-speaking youth and families reported to YP Services in that region;
- Some English-speakers have diverse racial and cultural backgrounds. Real or apprehended racism, discrimination and lack of cultural comfort can add to any existing obstacles to service in English;
- There are also anecdotal reports of difficulties of a linguistic nature encountered during interventions due to limitations of the family to engage in an intervention in French, and/or of the worker assigned to undertake an intervention in English. As a general rule, in psychosocial interventions, use of the language of the youth and family is the one likely to produce the best clinical result, and be the most comfortable for the family members involved;
- This information leads the QCGN to question whether, in regions outside Montreal, English-speaking children and youth, and their families, have access to child and family first line psychosocial intervention services, and Youth Protection services, in a manner equivalent to their French-speaking counterparts. If interventions in English are somehow deficient, apart from the problem of less effective clinical outcomes, the compromission of rights under the Youth Protection Act may also be an issue;

Between now and the spring 2020 hearings of the Special Commission, QCGN will further document its understanding of the situation and requests to opportunity to share its findings in hearings with the Commission at that time.

At the same time, should the hypothesis of less access to services appear to be supported, QCGN will outline proposed solutions, whether Youth Protection continues to be managed by the existing CISSS/CIUSSSs, or under some other form of governance.

QCGN thanks the Commission for its attention.

Communication on these matters, and about this brief, can be addressed to:

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