

Investigation into a Contracted Residential Agency

New Spirit Youth Services

MCFD use only

May 14, 2018

Investigation into a Contracted Agency-New Spirit

Executive Summary

Assigned social worker: Sydnee Dinsmore and Davinder Judge

Agency Information:

Agency Name: New Spirit

Executive Director: Rachele Gabriel (**s.22** as of May 3rd, 2018)
Lillian Markin- Effective May 3rd, 2018

New Spirit Youth Services Incorporated was established in May 2017 however the contracts remained under the previous agency name (New Spirit and Affiliates Homes) until November 1, 2017 due to contract negotiation. New Spirit and Affiliates Homes was established in February 2005 and over the years, MCFD and Metis Family Services (DAA) have had 24 contracts with the agency. These included emergency bed placements, satellite home model, and long term placements. Under New Spirit Youth Services Inc. there were a total of 13 contracts.

New Spirit Youth Services Inc. received a 3 year CARF accreditation in May 2015. Rachele Gabriel obtained an extension until December 2018 due to **s.22** for the next accreditation cycle.

Involved Caregivers:

CAREGIVER NAME

s.22

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Involved Children/Youth:

NAME	DOB	AGE	HOUSE	GSW
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s.22

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Caller information:

On February 2, 2018, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) received a report regarding concerns for caregiver s.15,s.22 a current employee of New Spirit. Concerns reported were that s.1 was a drug dealer s.15,s.22 s.15,s.22 s.15,s.22 caller stated that s.1 was gang affiliated.

Protocol Screening Decision:

On February 2nd, 2018, a report was received by the Ministry that s.15,s.22 a caregiver for New Spirit Youth Services Inc., was selling drugs to children in care as well as engaging in substance use with children in care.

New Spirit Youth Services provides contracted residential services to South Fraser SDA and Metis Family Services SDA.

Director of Operations Walter Serraglio and Team Leader Heather Hanley made a decision to investigate the reported concerns of Neglect with Physical Harm or Likelihood of Physical Harm. The incident was assigned to lead investigator Social Worker Sydnee Dinsmore. New Spirit Youth Services Executive Director Rachele Gabriel was notified of the investigation on February 2nd, 2018. As the Provincial Director of Child Welfare (or delegate) is responsible for investigations involving places of service in more than one SDA and/or DAA, oversight of the investigation was assigned to Dianne McNeill, Director of Special Investigations.

Immediate Actions to Ensure Safety and Well-Being of the Children in Care

To address the immediate safety concerns, it was decided that s.15,s.22 would be barred from working until the investigation was completed.

As the concerns regarding numerous caregivers emerged, Guardianship Workers of all youth were informed of the situation. GSWs were requested to have regular contact with the youth for whom they held responsibility. After Hours was requested to attend all homes on weekends and at some other critical points to ensure the residents were safe.

Due to the nature of the concerns being reported s.15,s.22, a decision was made early in the investigative process to request from the agency a copy of all the completed criminal record checks. At this point it was determined a number of caregivers were working without completion of their Criminal Record Checks or local RCMP checks. As a result of this, the Provincial Director of Child Welfare (PDCW) placed a moratorium on future placements with New Spirit. At this time the Centralized Services Hub began their scheduled screening process.

Investigation:

During the investigation, information was received that confirmed the initial report.

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Concerns emerged regarding several other caregivers working with New Spirit Youth Services. A decision was made to interview all residents in the agency, and, eventually, s.15.s.22

s.15,s.22

s.15,s.22

s.15,s.22

relayed the following concerns:

On May 3rd, 2018, the agency Executive Director, Rachele Gabriel, s.22_ effective immediately leaving no one in charge of the agency for several days. At this time there is new leadership in the agency, Lillian Markin; however, the organizational structure remains unclear.

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Collaterals:

During the course of the investigation Social Worker Sydnee Dinsmore and Social Worker Davinder Judge interviewed 22 youth. SW Dinsmore and SW Judge conducted collaterals with their respective guardianship workers.

SW Dinsmore: s.15,s.22
confirmed s. was selling drugs to s.15,s.22

On April 23rd, 2018 Director of Special Investigation (PDCW), Dianne McNeill, DOO Walter Serraglio and TL Heather Hanley met with Rachele Gabriel in regards to the concerns disclosed. s.22

s.22
s.22

s.15

On May 3rd, 2018 SW Dinsmore and SW Judge interviewed s.15,s.22
denied all allegations reported.

Until recently, investigations have not been tracked on the ICM system, therefore the primary Resource Files was reviewed to find historical investigations conducted by MCFD or the former Executive Director Peter Markin. Through this file review and collaterals with Metis Family Services a total of six previous allegations were found, three of which resulted in investigations. Two investigations were completed by MCFD or MFS and one was completed by Peter Markin.

In February 2016 allegations were received that a caregiver was a physical threat to a youth, and that the caregiver was not using appropriate behaviour management with a youth. Metis Family Services investigated. Although the finding was that there were no concerns around physical harm, there were concerns around the violation of the youth's rights (Rights of Children in Care). A number of recommendations were made, including the change of caregiver for the youth, steps around notification of After Hours when police attend a residence, improvements to agency documentation processes, training to be provided re: the rights of youth in care and behaviour and conflict management

In December 2016 allegations were received that a caregiver had been using marijuana in the residence s.15,s.22

The agency investigated this situation. The findings in this situations was that the concerns were valid. s.15,s.22

In January 2016 concerns were reported that an s.15,s.2 caregiver was engaged in an inappropriate relationship with a s.15, resident. s.15,s.22

s.15,s.22 Although there was no finding of the youth being in need of

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protection, recommendations were going to be made around proper procedures and boundaries, however before that process was fully completed, the current investigation commenced.

The Centralized Service Hub worked closely with the investigating team to ensure that information that was emerging regarding the screening process was being shared in a timely manner.

Findings:

I. Reported Information:

On February 2nd, 2018, a report was received by the Ministry that s.15,s.22 a caregiver for New Spirit Youth Services Inc., was selling drugs to children in care as well as engaging in substance use with children in care.

II. Information Gathered:

s.15,s.22 youth interviewed disclosed concerns about the care they received at New Spirit Youth Services. The disclosures of these youth were found to be credible by investigators. Many of the youth disclosed concerns of a similar nature and the disclosures were voluntary and independent. s.15,s.22 s.15,s.22

s.15,s.22 The following are the findings of the investigation:

- Drug Use by staff: s.15,s.22 s.15,s.22
- Inappropriate Contact with youth: s.15,s.22 s.15,s.22
- s.15,s.22

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III. Findings

The findings of this investigation are that the concerns for Neglect with the likelihood for physical harm have been substantiated.

As a result of the concerning disclosures by youth regarding caregiver conduct, s caregivers were permanently prohibited from caring for children or youth in care; s.15,s.22

s.15,s.22 Further caregivers were later prohibited for other reasons described below.

In addition to concerns regarding the safety of youth, a number of concerns were revealed about the quality of care the youth were receiving. s.15,s.22 s.15,s.22

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s.15,s.22

Additional Concerns

Screening requests were submitted to the Centralized Services Hub on 30 caregivers. As noted above, s.22 caregivers were prohibited as a result of concerns s.15,s.22
s.15,s.22 additional caregivers were permanently prohibited from working with
youth s.15,s.22
s.15,s.22

In total, s of the 33 caregivers hired by the agency have been permanently prohibited from working with children and youth in care. s.15,s.22

Significant concerns emerged regarding the leadership of the organization. There have been ongoing concerns about the agency's response to the allegations, s.22

s.22

Additional concerns existed as well about the overall operation of the agency. These concerns include:
s.22

- the corporate partner/Executive Director s.22 with no notice, on May 3, 2018 leaving no one in charge of operations, including coordinating caregivers;
s.22

- current leadership s.22 has been unable to identify anyone in the agency who can fulfill the role of program manager or executive director;

The Director has concluded, as a result of this instability, children and youth were further placed at risk.

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Actions Taken

Effective June 1, 2018 all children and youth placed in New Spirit Youth Services were moved to new homes.

Based on the findings of this investigation the director has lost confidence in the agency's ability to provide an acceptable quality of care to children and youth in care now or in the foreseeable future. For this reason, the Provincial Director of Child Welfare has decided to discontinue contracting with and placing children and youth in care with this agency.