



Grey County

Special Needs Resourcing (SNR) Review

→ Presentation to Council
December 12th, 2019

Project Overview

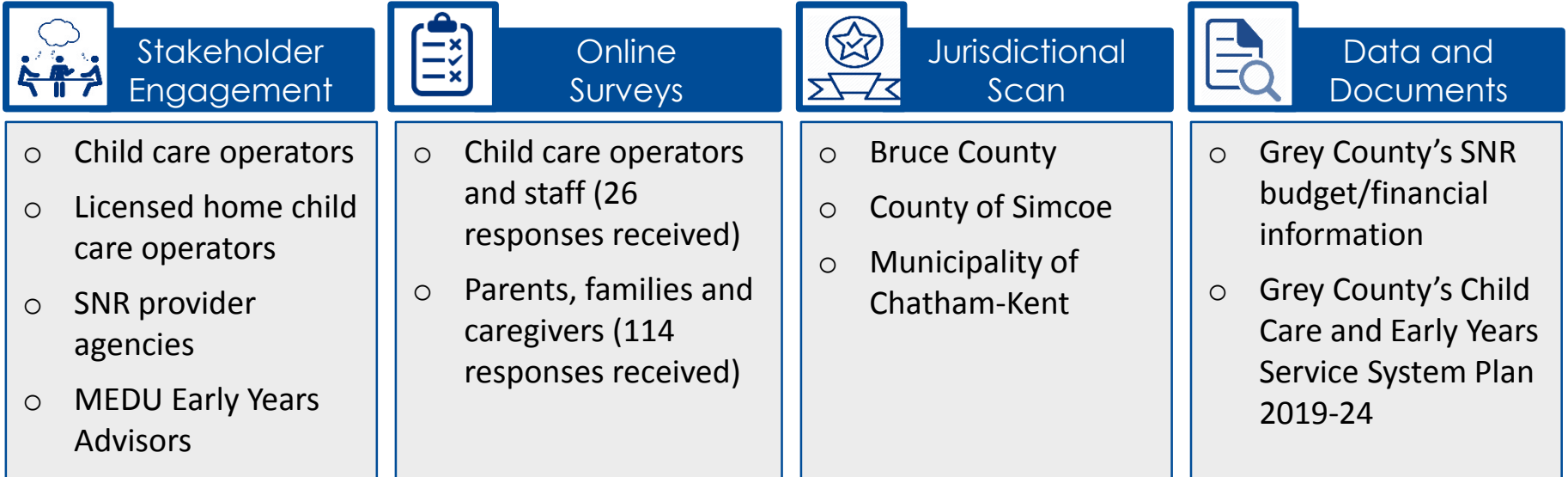
Grey County is responsible for planning and managing licensed child care services throughout the County, including **Special Needs Resourcing (SNR)**. SNR supports the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care settings.

Optimus SBR is an independent managing consulting firm that undertook a review of Grey County's SNR system.

Goals of the Review

- 1** Identify strengths, gaps and challenges with Grey County's current SNR system.
- 2** Develop proposed model options to strengthen the SNR system.

Methodology



Grey County's SNR Review Findings and Model Options Report

Overview of Grey County's SNR System

The Ontario Ministry of Education has established guidelines to support how Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) should manage and fund child care services in Ontario.




Children and Families

Grey County is home to approximately 94,000 residents, of which 15% are between 0-14 years of age.



SNR Provider Agencies

Grey County has two SNR provider agencies who serve the child care centres: Community Living Owen Sound, and Keystone Child, Youth & Family Services.



Child Care Operators

Grey County has 21 child care operators who operate licensed child care sites across the County's geographical boundaries. There are additional licensed home child care centres.



CMSM

Grey County is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), responsible for managing and funding child care services in the County.

Strengths of the SNR System

The assessment of Grey County's current SNR model identified four key strengths that will be important to build upon going forward.

Capable and dedicated staff

- Caring, knowledgeable and capable Resource Consultants
- Commitment to providing the best possible services to children, families and caregivers

Some collaboration and coordination

- Resource Consultants (RCs) have strong presence in community and built numerous partnerships
- Some positive working relations between Resource Consultants of the SNR provider agencies

Valuable, quality services

- Staff in the child care centres generally see value in the services provided by the Resource Consultants
- Staff are generally welcoming and receptive to their visits and supports

Simple referral process

- Simple, timely, and not time-consuming referral process for SNR services of either provider agency

Opportunities for Improvement in the SNR System

The assessment of Grey County's current SNR model identified five key opportunities for improvement that will be important to consider going forward.

Operate as an SNR system

Some links and collaborations between key agencies, but it generally does not function as a cohesive system or team

Clear roles and responsibilities

SNR provider agencies have distinct focus or mandates – clarify the different roles and responsibilities of each agency involved in SNR delivery

Relationship building

Develop positive working relationships and build rapport between key staff involved in SNR delivery

Consistencies in experiences

Create consistencies across SNR services that children, families and child care centres experience, e.g., receptiveness and presence of RCs, scheduling and attendance of RCs, types of interactions with children and staff

Aligning resources with community need.

Clear guidelines for application, challenges with recruitment for position, funding allocations

Lessons Learned from Comparable Jurisdictions

Optimus conducted a jurisdictional scan to complement the findings from our review. The scan aimed to identify best practices and lessons learned of three comparator jurisdictions: Bruce County, County of Simcoe, and Municipality of Chatham-Kent.



The system benefits when the **CMSM plays a strong role in overseeing the SNR services system**, and ensuring roles and responsibilities are clear between all key stakeholders involved in delivery.



The system benefits when the **CMSM works collaboratively with the key stakeholders** to ensure services are being delivered in a consistent manner across licensed child care settings.



Geographic alignment of Resource Consultant to specific licensed child care settings within the CMSM's catchment area has resulted in numerous benefits, including child care centres having a single point of contact, a consistent and regular presence of Resource Consultants in the centres, and opportunity to build better rapport with the Resource Consultant.



The **use of available data has allowed some jurisdictions to proactively plan** for funding allocation and service delivery, and has resulted in the use of available funds in a more transparent and accountable manner.

Proposed SNR Models

Optimus has developed two models that will strengthen and improve how SNR services are delivered and funded in Grey County. There are some common features to both models.

Multiple SNR Providers

Model 1:
Enhanced
Status Quo

- Grey County asserts its leadership and oversight as CMSM regarding SNR service delivery
- Two SNR provider agencies work better together/maintain current number of resource consultants

Lead SNR Provider

Model 2:
Lead SNR
Service
Provider

- Grey County asserts its leadership and oversight as CMSM regarding SNR service delivery
- Lead external SNR provider selected through a transparent procurement (RFP) process

Common features:

- Collaborative planning and regular team meetings;
- Geographic alignment of all Resource Consultants to ensure full coverage of all licensed child care settings;
- Universal and consistent approach to service delivery;
- Use of data to support decision-making; and
- Use of feedback mechanisms to enable continuous improvement.

Multiple SNR Providers – Enhanced Status Quo

**Multiple
SNR
Providers**

**Model 1:
Enhanced
Status Quo**

- Grey County asserts its leadership and oversight as CMSM regarding SNR service delivery
- Two SNR provider agencies work better together/ maintain current number of resource consultants

Implementation Considerations:

- Straightforward implementation
- Some time and effort investment required to implement
- Ongoing monitoring, commitment, leadership and oversight in day-to-day manner to ensure the benefits of the model are realized

Advantages:

- Grey County will play stronger role in overseeing SNR delivery
- Little disruption to existing contractual agreements
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Increased coordination and collaborative planning between key agencies
- Some impact on reducing duplicated work
- Regular mechanism for collecting feedback from parents and child care centres

Disadvantages:

- Success of the model is entirely dependent on Grey County asserting strong leadership role
- May not address inconsistencies in service delivery, as providers have different mandates/focus
- May not address existing tensions between provider agencies
- No impact on funding allocations, or reductions in administrative expenditures

Lead SNR Service Provider

**Lead
SNR
Provider**

**Model 2:
Lead SNR
Service Provider**

- Grey County asserts its leadership and oversight as CMSM regarding SNR service delivery
- Lead external SNR service provider selected through a transparent procurement (RFP) process

Implementation Considerations:

- Moderately complex implementation
- Concentrated time and effort investment require to implement
- Conducting a transparent, open, fair procurement (RFP) process to select the lead SNR provider agency
- More manageable and less demanding on a day-to-day manner for Grey County once implemented

Advantages:

- Clear roles and responsibilities; and single accountability framework
- Consistent and standardized SNR service delivery approach; single mandate/focus
- Working as a cohesive SNR team
- Increased coordination and collaborative planning with lead agency
- Moderate reductions in administrative expenditures
- Reductions in duplicated work

Disadvantages:

- Disruptions to existing contractual agreements
- Transition will require careful planning and monitoring, as well as consultation with impacted stakeholders
- There may be fees associated to implementation

Preferred Future State Model

*Based on Optimus' experience, expertise and understanding of Grey County's current landscape, the consultants recommend that Grey County proceeds with **Model 2: Lead SNR Service Provider**.*

- Numerous key benefits from a system perspective:
 - Clear roles and responsibilities,
 - A single accountability framework,
 - Increased coordination and collaboration,
 - Consistent SNR service delivery approach,
 - Service delivery working as a cohesive team, and
 - Reductions in administrative expenditures.

- However, implementation will require careful planning and one-time investment.

