



Home Sharing:

A Review of Current Practice and Policy with Recommendations

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Spring 2008

This report was prepared by the *Community Living Research Project* based at the School of Social Work and Family Studies, University of British Columbia. This document is part of a larger research project exploring the Community Living supports and services available locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally for adults with developmental disabilities.

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This research is supported by the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Community Living British Columbia.

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Introduction

The increasing prevalence of Family Model homes (now referred to as "Home Sharing" in B.C.) as a residential model in British Columbia necessitates an exploration of these types of arrangements to better understand their operation. Generally speaking, Home Sharing refers to residential support in which one or more adults reside within typical family structures and family residences. Home Sharing is further characterized by the placement of adults in a home with a family (non-biological and/or not related), similarly to foster care for children, where the adult lives as another family member.

Just as the definition of 'family' has come to include many different variations of people in relationships with each other, Home Sharing reflects this diversity. Home Sharing has evolved to include such situations where an adult is placed with a couple with no children or even in an apartment as a roommate to someone who provides a degree of support to that adult. Literature discussing "family model homes" describe this model as "A home owned or rented by an adult or family in which they live and in which they provide care and support for one or more unrelated persons with ID/DD" (Bruininks, Byun, Coucouvanis, Lakin, Larson, & Prouty, 2005, p. 71).

In British Columbia, Home Sharing has been known by a number of terms often reflecting an organization's mandate for providing services to adults with developmental disabilities. The terms "Life Sharing"² and "Supported Living," "Family Life homes"³ and "Shared Living"⁴ have been identified as commonly used terms for describing Home Sharing over the past few years. Recently, Community Living BC (CLBC) adopted the term "Home Sharing" as the official

name for the described living arrangement. Thus, for the purposes of this report, the term Home Sharing will be used to capture this range of residential model. Just as the term used to refer to this residential support for individuals with developmental disabilities varies greatly, so do the perspectives of organizations providing Home Sharing regarding how this model should be organized. Such perspectives will be further explored later in the report.

The increasing placement of adults with developmental disabilities into Home Sharing represents a very clear shift away from placing adults into group homes. As Table 1 depicts below, there are over 2000 adults in B.C. placed within Home Sharing arrangements. This move has been occurring at rapid pace and as more and more adults are being placed in Home Sharing.

A discussion regarding what Home Sharing is and how it supports adults with developmental disabilities is crucial to the development of provincial standards and policies. This report is an attempt to get to the heart of Home Sharing and provide a greater overall understanding of what the trend toward Home Sharing will mean for the adults living within them.

Method

In order to better understand Home Sharing as a residential model, key informant interviews were conducted over the course of two months, from February 15, 2007 to April 13, 2007. There were five key informants included all of whom were significantly involved in the provision of Home Sharing in the Lower Mainland of Vancouver and Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Each interview was between one and two hours in length with follow-up communication taking place via email and telephone. Interview participants included:

- Two Executive Directors of non-profit organizations;
- One Policy Analyst and One Project Manager working for the crown corporation, Community Living British Columbia, and;
- A President of a private organization, who is also the Executive Director of a network of private Home Sharing home providers.

The interviews were conducted with the intent to compile information about how adults with developmental disabilities in the province are receiving residential support through the Home Sharing model.

This report is based on the information shared during these five interviews and includes information about the provision of Home Sharing including the current safeguards in place, the funding flow, monitoring and oversight, the role of family, and respite services. The overall purpose of this report is to provide a clear picture of how the Home Sharing model operates as a residential placement for adults with developmental disabilities in B.C.

In addition to the interviews conducted in Vancouver and Victoria, a number of written documents were used to complete the picture of Home Sharing as it has developed in BC. Some relevant literature from the "Residential Options for Adults with Developmental Disabilities: Quality and Cost Outcomes" report is included in this summary report (Community Living Research Project, 2006). General information from Internet sources, the websites for each organization interviewed including the CLBC website, and the Ministry of Health website have also been incorporated. Current legislation, including the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act, Community Care and Assisted Living*

Regulations, and *Adult Care Regulations* were also used as references for greater clarity and understanding.

Interviews

The first interview was conducted with the President of the private service organization Integra Support Services Limited (ISSL) in Victoria, British Columbia.³ This individual is also the Executive Director of the Envision Society (ENVISION), a network organization made up of over 1600 private residential Home Sharing support providers for people with developmental disabilities throughout B.C. She spoke about both her private organization and the work of ENVISION in B.C.

The second interview² was with the Executive Director of The Richmond Society for Community Living (RSCL) in Richmond, B.C., a non-profit organization that provides a range of services to adults with developmental disabilities, including a number of different residential arrangements such as Home Sharing.

The third interview¹ with the Executive Director of the Langley Association for Community Living (LAACL), another non-profit organization, also explored the range of residential services provided for adults in Langley, B.C. Finally, interviews were held with a Policy Analyst⁴ and the Project Manager⁵ for the Residential Options Project with CLBC, the crown corporation that provides a range of services (including Home Sharing) and funding to adults with developmental disabilities. CLBC provides Home Sharing through contracts with both non-profit organizations and private organizations, such as ISSL, and through direct contracts with Home Sharing support providers. These interviews have provided an overall picture of Home Sharing in B.C. according to the various avenues through which this model operates.

Defining Home Sharing

Although there is no one definition for Home Sharing, the collection of descriptions that are available provide us with a better understanding of the range and the variability of this residential support. As an umbrella term, Home Sharing is used to describe a number of situations in which an adult with a developmental disability is placed with another person or people in a residential environment. Most simply described, Home Sharing is a residential arrangement for adults with developmental disabilities being placed in a family home setting, similar to foster care for children, where the adult lives as another family member. In this placement, the adult both receives support as needed and becomes part of the family.

This very basic model, however, can and has taken on a number of different forms. For example, family structure, physical layout of a family home, and the amount of support an adult may require can be very different. Some examples of this variation include:

- Living with a family (parents and children) in a spare bedroom in the home;
- Living with a family in a separate bedroom suite in the basement, which could become the home of the adult;
- Living with a roommate in a house or apartment⁵;
- Living in an apartment next to a family or family's residence.

The adult may be included in all aspects of the family's life or (s)he may only participate occasionally or minimally in family activities, such as meals and outings. The flexibility of the model aims to ensure that the level of support

required by the adult is matched to the ability of the support provider. Support levels can vary from 24-hour supervision to minimal support requirements such as preparing meals and occasionally checking in with the adult to ensure that (s)he is okay.

Overall, Home Sharing can span a spectrum of different residential features and can accommodate the unique needs of many people with developmental disabilities. The scope of Home Sharing can be conceptualized on a continuum with high levels of support and a long term, stable relationship with a support provider on one end and low levels of support and a less involved relationship on the other. However, one key informant stated that adults with lower support needs and those who appreciate the opportunity to live with a family tend to gravitate towards the Home Sharing model.³

CLBC has formally included roommate arrangements in which the roommate provides some support to the adult, under the umbrella of Home Sharing. Typically this type of Home Sharing provision is for adults who do not require a great deal of support, but are not independent enough to participate in CLBC's Semi-Independent Living program. Broadening the definition of Home Sharing has important implications for the functioning, monitoring, and outcomes of this model. For example, the dynamics of a roommate Home Sharing placement and a family Home Sharing placement are likely quite different and thus may require different policies regarding operation and monitoring. In addition, collecting meaningful information about how this model effectively or ineffectively supports adults is complicated by the variety within the model. The importance of being able to obtain clear outcome measures is apparent for

many reasons. Firstly, this model is fairly new and little is known about how it functions. Secondly, a positive feature highlighted with regard to this model is its ability to provide personally unique residential support in a way that enhances quality of life. In order to ensure this is the case, it is important to be able to examine actual outcomes in the range of variations within the overall model.

Irrespective of which definition of Home Sharing is used, there appear to be four common threads within Home Sharing arrangements (see Table 1). The first and clearest element is the sharing of a home between someone with a developmental disability and someone who provides support; ultimately Home Sharing takes the form of a tenancy-type relationship. Secondly, this model is characterized by home sharing between people that are not related or who are not immediate family members. Thirdly, in most cases, home ownership or tenancy resides with the Home Sharing provider. However, other variations of ownership or tenancy also exist, such as shared tenancy or ownership on the part of the adult with a developmental disability; the latter variations are less common. And lastly, the caregiver's home is his or her primary residence and the adult resides within this home. Beyond these elements of Home Sharing are an array of possible residential features based on the degree of support required by and independence level of the adult with a developmental disability.

Table 1: Home Sharing Constants

Home Sharing	1	Home sharing takes place between an adult with a developmental disability and someone who provides support to this adult.
	2	People participating in home sharing are not related nor are immediate family members.
	3	In most cases, home ownership or tenancy rental resides with Home Sharing provider (tenancy may be shared).
	4	Primacy of Residence – the home owner has the home as a primary residence.

Home Sharing arrangements vary greatly and can best be described as a continuum from those that are based mainly on the desire for a relationship between the Home Sharing provider and the adult to those based more on the support needs of the adult. Traditionally, Home Sharing has sought in part to address the need for relationships between the adult and the home provider, while providing the level of support required by the individual. These relationships will of course be ideally based on the choice of the individuals involved and their desire for such relationships. In an ideal situation, home sharing should have at its foundation these relationships which may be more difficult to establish within a traditional group home or staffed residential setting. While recognizing the variation in approaches and terminology, this report concentrates primarily on the more typical home sharing arrangements involving living within the primary residence of a non-related adult. Roommate situations are a valuable option for many people but are not as central to the concerns of this report.

Current Trends

CLBC provides four types of residential supports including: 1) staffed non-profit residences and private or for profit housing (i.e. group homes), 2) Home Sharing arrangements, including micro-boards, 3) semi-independent living, and 4) residential supports arranged via individualized funding, direct funding, or microboards.¹ CLBC describes the direction towards more Home Sharing as a way of providing more personalized residential situations. Some examples include roommate situations and home equity arrangements which enable adults to inherit property and remain in their homes while receiving support.

According to CLBC's Adult Services Regional Quarterly Report: March 2006, in 2004/2005 there were a total of 130 adults who entered into the Home Sharing services.¹³ In 2005/2006 this number increased to 206 and in 2006/2007 the total number of adults entering into home sharing services was 167. The regional breakdown of home sharing services is as follows:

¹ A type of living arrangement in which people typically have a greater degree of independence and capacity and live in their own apartment or in a home or apartment owned by a service provider.

Table 2. Home Sharing and Group Homes: Regional Breakdown

Provincial Region (Quality Service Area)	Number of Adults in Home Sharing Settings	Average Cost	Number of Adults in Group Home Settings	Average Cost
South Interior	328	\$24,084	273	\$95,416
North Interior	295	\$23,774	286	\$80,447
Simon Fraser_Tri-Cities	238	\$32,166	217	\$107,266
Surrey_Delta_Richmond	193	\$32,679	387	\$95,510
Upper Fraser	272	\$24,920	336	\$88,071
Vancouver Coastal	189	\$25,330	348	\$98,150
Central, Upper Island	326	\$32,651	208	\$106,076
South Vancouver Island	276	\$29,353	322	\$106,637
North	90	\$23,999	177	\$107,475
Total	2, 207	\$27,796	2,554	\$97,252

It is important to note that many key informants believed that the figures in Table 2 do not reflect the "real" costs associated with offering Home Sharing as a residential option (e.g. administration costs). In addition, there was agreement that comparing Home Sharing to Group Home living was like comparing apples and oranges.

For some, Home Sharing is viewed as both an economically desirable way to provide individualized support and a way to create and maintain long-term relationships for people with developmental disabilities.¹ It is important to note that Home Sharing is not for everyone.³ All key informants interviewed stated that

adults with very high needs and those who are considered to have complex health care needs are not likely to be placed within Home Sharing are not always capable of supporting the needs of the adult.

However, there are situations where adults who have much greater support needs can be supported through Home Sharing. For example, there are occasions when support providers, such as a retired nurse, have the necessary skills to manage the needs of certain adults.⁵ However, if the adult requires nighttime support from the caregiver or specialized lifts and equipment that is not available, Home Sharing may not be a suitable placement.² In these instances, a staffed residence providing 24 hour a day support is more typical.²

Each organization interviewed had a different approach to providing Home Sharing. At the time of the interviews, RSCL had 26 homes or roommate type situations and 22 adults within these Home Sharing residences. At RSCL, every attempt is made to ensure that no more than one adult lives in a Home Sharing residence. Although on rare occasions a second adult may move into a Home Sharing residence, RSCL would not support a third adult moving into such a home.²

A similar perspective is emphasized by LACL, as the organization provided residential services to 25 adults in Home Sharing arrangements within Langley and the surrounding area. LACL has clear practices that dictate no more than one adult can be supported in a Home Sharing placement. As soon as a second adult moves into a home, LACL is reluctant to consider it a home sharing arrangement. To further distinguish residential models, LACL refers to a "group home" as any residence in which more than one person requiring support lives

that requires staffing. The association is working towards phasing out their group homes as a placement for adults unless the level of support required by the adult makes it necessary.¹

ENVISION has a volunteer board and acts as an association for its approximately 360 members who provide support to adults with developmental disabilities through home sharing or similar arrangements in the private sector in British Columbia. One of the agencies involved with ENVISION is ISSL, which provides Home Sharing to 30 adults in the Victoria region of Vancouver Island. The term “Family Life Homes” is used by ENVISION which is meant to capture the choice families make in having adults live in their house and be included in both their home and their lives.³ ENVISION was created when a number of Home Sharing providers across B.C. came together following the Ministry for Children and Families Contract Program Restructuring initiative in 1997. The aim of ENVISION was to keep Home Sharing providers connected, to remove isolation for providers and influence towards the direction of Home Sharing.

There are some Home Sharing arrangements with more than three adults living within a home and in these cases, a license through B.C.’s Office of the Assisted Living Registrar is required. Licensing for these homes works to ensure that each residential care home operates under the *Adult Care Regulations*, the *Community Care and Assisted Living Regulations* and *The Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. The licensing establishes a minimum set of health and safety standards for homes providing support to three or more adults with developmental disabilities.

Both ISSL and ENVISION do not have a set capacity of adults that may

reside in a Home Sharing residence, providing the proper licensing is in place. However, some key informants indicated that having three or more adults in such a placement was the exception and not the rule. In the cases where there are three or more adults in a home, caregivers may apply for licensing under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. Different terminology and classifications are associated with licensing under the relevant Act and regulations. The following terms refer to settings supporting three or more adults: "assisted living residences," "residential care homes" and "community care facilities". Homes with less than three adults are outside the scope of this legislation. Despite distinctions made in Home Sharing through licensing requirements, organizations may continue to use the term "Home Sharing" to refer homes that support more than three adults. For example, both ISSL and ENVISION use the concept of a Home Sharing to refer to a home with any number of adults residing in it, neither ISSL nor ENVISION distinguish a Home Sharing placement from a staffed residence or group home.³

The licensing of Home Sharing residences ensures that certain health and safety standards as well as a complaint resolution process are in place for those adults residing in the home. Moreover, the *Adult Care Regulations* and the *Community Care and Assisted Living Regulations* outline very specific standards for the support adults receive in the home, such as bathing, the administration of medication, and the preparation and monitoring of food. These standards are applicable regardless of how an agency or organization wishes to describe the housing for more than two adults in one residential placement. The important point regarding licensing requirements is that a Home Sharing placement with up

to two adults, regardless of the residential set-up, does not require any form of licensing in B.C.

CLBC is currently recruiting more Home Sharing providers while simultaneously continuing to create relationships with different organizations to create more contracts for Home Sharing. This means CLBC holds two different roles with support providers: (1) direct contracts with people/families to provide support for adults and (2) contracted agreements with organizations or agencies, which in turn find and select the caregivers and manage the Home Sharing residences. There are currently over 1500 adults placed directly in Home Sharing residences through CLBC in British Columbia.⁴ Although CLBC continues to recruit and provide direct contracts with Home Sharing caregivers, the organization is also attempting to move towards contracts with both non-profit and private agencies to supply residential support. Since 2004, there have been over 500 new individuals in Home Sharing supports through both direct and indirect contracts with CLBC.⁶ At this time, it is unclear how many were through direct contracts with CLBC. A formal breakdown of is hoped for in the near future.

Statistics regarding the range of disability that is common of adults in Home Sharing settings are limited at this time. According to CLBC, the average age of adults in Home Sharing is 40.9 years old.⁶ Although at this time there is no data as to the typical length of stay by an adult in a Home Sharing placement, RSCL had one adult who has continued to live in the same home since RSCL began 13 years ago. Anecdotal information gathered by informal discussions with Home Sharing providers has revealed that, although an adult may try in a

number of homes initially, once a good match between adult and Home Sharing provider has been found, the placements tend to be long term.⁵

Recruitment and Screening of Home Sharing Providers

The process of recruiting, choosing and becoming a Home Sharing care provider differs across each organization. In terms of identifying possible support providers, a variety of avenues exist. Some caregivers are identified through word of mouth in the community and approach LACL and RSCL to get involved as a caregiver or respite provider.² In some cases, these caregivers or people approach the organization to become a caregiver for a specific adult.¹

ISSL and CLBC also recruit caregivers through word of mouth and community connections. ISSL, however, does not currently have a policy regarding who can become a provider, and many of the current caregivers are previous staff members of the organization.³ In contrast, LACL does not allow staff to become providers so as to minimize any potential for a conflict of interest.¹ CLBC advertises for support providers and has a policy for those who are eligible. These standards have been described by CLBC as less rigorous as those held by agencies such as LACL and RSCL.¹

LACL's experience with recruiting providers has been such that they are now arranging some home sharing arrangements with single people; previously these placements were restricted to a family setting. This experience has slowly arisen out of extended networks of friends and families within Langley coming forward, wishing to be considered as potential home sharing providers. Due to the desired long-term nature of Home Sharing, LACL has been reluctant use the term "roommate" as such language tended to attract those with more

temporary plans such as students. As Home Sharing aims to provide long-term support and living arrangements, roommate type situations are chosen very carefully.

All key informants agreed that one of the most essential elements of Home Sharing is the screening process of support providers. Ideally, one of the best ways of ensuring comprehensive screening is through a system that provides a clear assessment of the adult support provider and his/her ability to provide quality support in their home. Screening should also take place over time through observation and should involve the completion of a formal assessment of each potential applicant. Such measures work to ensure that those who have purely financial motivation for becoming Home Sharing providers are identified.³ LACL and RSCL have extensive policies and an assigned staff member to conduct home studies and ensure the applicant meets the criteria and standards of the organization. Some key informants identified the need for both a mechanism and a set of standards for monitoring Home Sharing that are consistent across the province.

LACL's movement towards Home Sharing is occurring at an intentionally slow and cautious rate in an attempt to achieve truly individualized residential support services for each adult.¹ Selecting a provider is a process that can take many months of screening and assessment; LACL is determined to find both appropriate and long-term homes within the Langley area. The proximity of placements also plays a role in how LACL attempts to create "multiple and redundant safeguards" and maintain regular and consistent contact with adults and their support providers.¹

Similar to LACL, recruitment by RSCL to become a Home Sharing support provider to an adult is a long process that takes over three months and requires criminal record checks, references, First Aid and CPR training, a comprehensive home study and a number of interviews. There are pamphlets and books available for caregivers to read about what is expected of them and how to provide adequate support. Once RSCL has determined that a person is an eligible caregiver, the decision as to whether this person would make a good match is up to that adult and their family.

The perspective of the adult and his/her family are an important part of the screening and match process. At RSCL meetings are arranged for the adult and their family to meet with the caregiver and determine whether the placement will work out for everyone involved. RSCL views this aspect of the selection process as essential to the concept of Home Sharing and each adult and his or her family are encouraged to select a caregiver they believe they will be comfortable sharing not just their home, but their life with as well. Finally a plan, which is reviewed annually by the coordinator, the family, support provider and adult, is put in place regarding how the adult's needs will be met and how support will be provided.

Research demonstrated that Self Advocates identified having some control over one's living arrangement as a positive attribute of a living arrangement (Thompson, 2002). Such involvement helps to ensure a good fit between both families and the adult as they work to share their lives together.² In addition, valuing choice on the part of the adult and family is in line with recent trends emphasizing inclusion and self-determination.

Possibly the most important element of Home Sharing is the “match” between the adult and the support person or the residential environment chosen. The match is an essential piece of what becomes a “good placement” or one in which the adult and the support provider are both satisfied. This match was described by all key informants as a delicate relationship that requires a certain amount of attention and support from the organization. How each organization fosters this match and works to preserve the relationship between the adult and support provider, however, looks somewhat different.

In previous cases when LACL disagreed with the selection a family has made for a caregiver but allowed the placement anyway, the placement has broken down rather quickly. Based on these experiences, LACL takes a stronger stance when the support provider does not appear suitable (i.e.: is too young, not stable enough) but the agency allows the final decision of choosing support providers to remain with the adult and his or her family.

CLBC begins with the adult’s preferences and introduces the adult to a number of different home providers so as to ensure that the adult is involved in the selection of the home. CLBC maintains that the match is not a careless process but that a number of home visits are made to ensure the adult and the home provider are compatible. CLBC also asserts that although the “right match” may not be found initially and the adult may experience some movement in placements, overall when a good match is found, adults in Home Sharing residences find living arrangements that are long-term.⁵

Reiterated by LACL, RSCL, ISSL and CLBC was the importance of maintaining and fostering a delicate relationship between support providers,

adults and the agency.³ RSCL works to make sure that every placement is done carefully and that caregiver's motivation lies with their desire to share their lives with an adult with a developmental disability. Although RSCL believes strongly in Home Sharing, the organization maintains that this model is not for all adults.

Funding

Each Home Sharing placement is provided with two forms of payment for the support they provide to adults: (1) payment directly from CLBC or the organization/agency with whom they hold a contract and (2) payment from the adult placed within the home. Each home provider negotiates with CLBC or the agency for a set financial amount based on the level of support required by the adult. Agencies in turn negotiate this amount as well as some supplementary fees to cover the cost of administration, respite and placement monitoring and oversight.

There are two forms of contracts created between CLBC and Home Sharing providers and agencies or organizations. These two types are commonly be referred to as *Individual contracts*, specifically designed for the provision of service for one adult, and *Global contracts*, outlining the agreement for providing residential support to more than one adult with a developmental disability.

Individual Contracts

The contracts negotiated between non-profit organizations or agencies with CLBC include a number of different parts:

- An amount for "*fee for service*" for the cost of the provision of support by the provider,

- The cost of the actual support or “*non-wage related*” costs, such as rent, accommodation and food,
- An amount of money for the organization to provide *respite care* to the support provider,ⁱ
- An *administration fee* for the agency to access and provide support options, and
- An amount for the cost of the organization to provide a coordinator or a “*networking fee*” so the agency can hire a staff member to recruit, screen, liaise with providers and other concerned agencies and monitor each home sharing situation.

The “networking fee” is often described as 1:35 and is based on an organization's ability to provide one coordinator for every Home Sharing placements for 35 adults.² As the cost of providing accommodation and support to many adults remains far above their personal contribution of \$713, the “top up” amount (based on the components mentioned above) ends up being what is negotiated between the agency and CLBC. Providers that are contracted directly through CLBC do not negotiate for the respite amount, the administration fee or the networking fee.

The Individual contract and the amount CLBC contributes towards each adult for the support received through Home Sharing placements is based on his or her level of support based needs. These needs are categorized according to a provincially set document, titled the *Guide to Support Allocation*. This Guide is the foundation for determining the “fee for service” a Home Sharing support provider receives. The Guide also acts as a descriptor of the adult's needs (e.g.

the need for 24 hour support).⁹ Adults are assessed by CLBC Analysts based on the need for lesser requirements (categorized as 'A') through to higher requirements (categorized as 'D') and exceptional requirements (categorized as 'E'). This system is controversial with some agencies and providers and it is common that the assessment levels remain in dispute between CLBC and the agency. As adults age and their level of need shifts or increases, agencies have experienced difficulties in having CLBC Analysts agree to their revised assessment for support.³ Issues regularly arise between CLBC and providers/agencies/organizations when an adult's needs change and CLBC's policies do not provide for an increase in funding.³

All funding contracts for adults, either directly with CLBC or with an agency in British Columbia are managed in a very similar way. These contracts are referred to as *Client Service Agreements* and they are identical except in the amendments and terms as set by the agency and the support provider and/or by CLBC and the support provider.³ With regard to private agencies connected with ENVISION there is a general standardization of contracts for support providers; however, these can differ within regions and throughout the province.³ When contracts for Home Sharing were moved from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), many organizations including ENVISION adopted the contract standards from MCFD. However such practices were not mandatory or required by agencies or providers. This transitional period of time has been described by some as a "free for all" as agencies were able to create their own contracts with Home Sharing providers without a clear standard of approach.³

Although the amount provided by CLBC to Home Sharing placements for each adult can be different depending on the level of support required, the amount contributed by the adult for his/her residential placement is the same. Typically adults with a developmental disability living in B.C. contribute to his/her cost of accommodation and support in the Home Sharing placement from their Disability Benefits (approximately \$713). This amount can be signed over to the agency or organization or they pay it directly to their support provider. This means that each adult, regardless of his/her level of support needed, personally contributes the same amount in British Columbia. In addition, how a placement is organized (i.e. through CLBC or agency) does not impact the adult in terms of cost or out of pocket expenses.⁵

One final note on funding, it should be noted that agency cost may appear higher than direct contracts but it has to be remembered that direct contracts do not include many of the cost for activities undertaken by the agency such as monitoring, recruitment, and support. These cost are borne directly by CLBC in the case of a direct contract and so do show up as a direct cost on the contracts.

For the few adults who do not access their monthly Disability Benefits moneys from the government to pay for their Home Sharing arrangement (e.g. those who have inherited money), the agency or organization can be paid directly by the adult, their family, the public guardian or another trusted individual. Should an adult not be able to manage his/her own payments for accommodation, and not have a family member or trusted friend to arrange this payment, a Public Guardian is available to provide this service.⁵

LACL and RSCL negotiate directly with CLBC for the funding necessary to support adults according to their needs.² The administration fee (approximately 10%) is charged by LACL and the other non-profit organizations to cover administration costs. The funding for day supports and other services provided by both LACL and RSCL are not tied to the adult and although it comes from CLBC, it is kept separately.¹ Despite the fact that funding for Home Sharing is tied directly to adults and their needs, RSCL does not use the provincial descriptors described previously (A, B, C, D, E) to indicate the adults level of support; instead RSCL refers to the adult's needs as either lower and/or higher.²

This process has changed moderately in the past few years. Recent changes ensure that all adults are receiving the same benefits and will be given the same amount to provide for their residential placement, regardless of where they live in the province or with whom they reside. This also means that even if an adult resides in the family home (s)he will continue to access the same amount of money as someone living in a Home Sharing environment. Such changes are also meant to provide the means for those who desire greater independence or for those adults who would prefer more involvement in determining their own support.⁵

Individual contracts between home providers and CLBC become more complicated with the broad definition of Home Sharing arrangements (e.g. in a roommate type situation). In roommate situations where a caregiver and an adult with a developmental disability have chosen an apartment or suite together, the payment for the residence may go to the landlord or to whoever was the primary renter, often the caregiver. Unfortunately, if the relationship

deteriorates, the living environment may need to change. It is also possible that for those adults with a developmental disability who own their own residence, they may receive rent from the caregiver who lives with them in a Home Sharing arrangement. In these types of arrangements it is possible to negotiate for a rent waiver in exchange for a reduction in fee for service for the caregiver. Ultimately, the funding for each adult may be directly linked to him/her, but it is organized differently based on the needs of the person and the residential supports they require.²

Recently CLBC decided to increase the fee for caregivers by four percent (two percent over a two year period). Although this increased amount will be going to all caregivers, those who are linked to agencies will not receive this increase directly. Instead this amount will be provided to the agency to administer to caregivers, as it deems necessary. Agencies hold the discretion about how to allocate this increase, as not every Home Sharing placement may be in need of an increase in funding. For example, those Home Sharing environments that have been established and have provided support for only six months may not require additional funding. Contrastingly, other homes that may not have received increased funding in the last five years may receive an increase.

Global Contracts

Global contracts are created between CLBC and the Home Sharing provider and agencies or organizations that provide support to more than one adult with a developmental disability residing within one residence. Most commonly, Global contracts are used to describe contracted funding for group

homes or staffed residences – where some resources within the facility can be shared (e.g. one night worker for three adults). Due to these features of this type of funding is more complicated. Individual contracts for a Home Sharing placement directly contracted through CLBC to provide support for one adult are altered to become a Global contract when a second adult is placed within the same home. Hence, all contracts for Home Sharing placements with more than one adult placed within them are considered Global contracts and are arranged on the basis of shared resources. Should one of the two adults leave the Home Sharing residence, the contract is revised and returns to an Individual contract. A CLBC Analyst, whose job involves reassessing changing situations within the home or according to the adult’s needs, organizes the revisions to the contracts.

Additional Funding

There is no additional funding provided by CLBC for other supports or particular requirements within the current funding scheme for Home Sharing residences. Currently, Home Sharing provider can approach non-profit organizations on behalf of the person for grants for specific items, such as physical modifications to homes, wheelchair accessible vehicles or specific supports. In addition, although CLBC only funds adult’s residential needs, families can apply to CLBC for an additional source of funding for specific needs or supports. However, it has been uncommon for such applications to be successful.³ This can be problematic where an individual may experience changing needs related to mobility or other issues and require adaptations to remain in the home.

For some adults, such as those with complex health care needs, additional funding can be accessed through the Ministry of Health. Once an adult has been placed within a Home Sharing residence, CLBC Facilitators can be reengaged to work with the family or home provider to explore options and access resources within their community (generic or otherwise). However, expectations are that the home provider finds his/her own additional resources within the community to meet the adult's support needs not provided for within the Client Service Agreement.⁵

Liability

Individual support providers are being asked to access additional liability insurance to cover any issues or situations that may arise from providing a Home Sharing placement. Currently, CLBC accesses liability insurance through the *Government Master Insurance Plan (GMIP)* "for harm or damage caused by inadvertent actions of employees acting in good faith."⁷ This creates difficulty as support providers in direct contracts with CLBC are not considered employees and instead are classified as "independent contractors". Coverage "can be extended" to support providers in direct contract with CLBC, however it must be negotiated with agencies and organizations as part of the contract.

The GMIP provides up to two million dollars liability insurance, which as described, can be carried through to the caregivers. Unfortunately, there are a number of issues regarding liability insurance that are still being explored. For example, the amount of liability insurance provided by agencies to support providers is not always considered adequate and does not include property insurance to cover damage to the caregiver's home caused by the adult for

whom they provide support.² The GMIP however, when accessed by an agency or organization, is often then coupled with or topped up with the agency's own insurance; this then flows through to the caregiver to provide increased insurance coverage for the Home Sharing provider. The additional cost non-profit organizations incur in order to provide additional coverage to their Home Sharing placements is a financial burden not carried by CLBC.

In some cases, Home Sharing providers have been denied insurance or are being charged higher rates because of the adults they will be supporting in these homes. In response to these challenges, some agencies have begun purchasing WCB insurance and then deducting these costs from the monthly support payments.

However in the direct contracts with CLBC, support providers are requested to purchase their own insurance beyond the basic level of coverage. As CLBC considers support providers private contractors, they also inform them of the need for them to connect with the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) and WorkSafe BC for "personal option protection"¹⁰ and to ensure they meet the requirements for caring for another adult. It is often the case that CLBC, or the agency that holds a contract with a provider, will check with the support provider to ensure they are covered by WCB. However, it is unclear at this point how often these checks are done.

Similarly, regardless of the contract type, insurance for one's home and the home's contents are currently the responsibility of the caregiver. It is this absence of insurance for one's home and contents are currently the responsibility of the caregiver. It is the absence of insurance for one's home and

belongings that has become an issue for those caregivers who provide support to adults with destructive behaviors or those who regularly damage property.² In some cases, CLBC acknowledges the possibility or eventuality of destructive behaviour and recognizes that certain compensation is occasionally required for Home Sharing providers. As such, these adults are considered to have higher levels of support-based needs which are negotiated within the Client Service Agreement between CLBC and the home provider.

Safeguard Measures

Although the selection of Home Sharing arrangements are made carefully by CLBC and organizations/agencies, the need for safeguards to ensure the safety and well-being of adults placed in Home Sharing is clear. The overall shift towards Home Sharing as a residential option is happening at an increasing rate throughout British Columbia. Recently CLBC noted that this model accounted for almost 50 percent of residential services in the province and, at present, it is a “relatively unregulated environment.”¹¹

This expeditious trend has raised concerns for some people in the non-profit sector responsible for managing some Home Sharing residences. The concerns shared in the key informant interviews were almost all related to the:

- Lack of safeguards and standards required by CLBC,
- Potential for isolation of both adults and caregivers,
- Bartering for money by caregivers,
- Lack of a shared set of values for the model,

- Potential for private agencies to increase "risk of drift" (i.e. for the model to move away from the values of Home Sharing to those of economic motivation), and
- Increased risk to adults because the model is being adopted too rapidly.

Monitoring and Oversight

There are currently 2,207 adults residing in Home Sharing placements across B.C. CLBC staff only visit the Home Sharing residences for which it holds direct contracts. One aspect of safeguards is the process of accreditation which requires that agencies uphold certain standards and health and safety checks. However, key informants were concerned that it is difficult to know if the standards required through accreditation are being upheld.

With regard to monitoring and oversight, agencies must employ their own coordinator to visit the Home Sharing settings they arrange. Each agency has a different ratio of coordinator/facilitator to Home Sharing settings; in some cases, the support ratio could be as high as one agency coordinator to eighty adults (1:80).³ Such ratios can impede regular monitoring of all adults in these placements. CLBC does not oversee the agencies it contracts with to ensure that adults are being seen regularly by agency staff.

One safeguard in place for Home Sharing placements supporting three or more adults is the licensing requirement through the provincial *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*. As mentioned previously, this licensing acts as a safeguard as there are a number of requirements to be met (e.g. how and what

support must be provided to the adult, the availability of an outside dispute resolution process).

CLBC does not currently monitor adults placed in Home Sharing residences through other agencies or organizations. In these instances, the agency is expected to provide the oversight of each home and the well-being of the adult living within the home. Many agencies and organizations are accredited and have their own standards to meet regarding their practices, the process of placement, and the oversight of each Home Sharing placement. Accreditation, however, is not required for organizations or agencies to hold a contract with CLBC to provide Home Sharing placements for adults.

Contrastingly, the monitoring of adults placed in Home Sharing through direct contracts with CLBC are monitored by CLBC staff, who will have anywhere between 30 to 80 adults with developmental disabilities they are supporting at any given time.⁵ Although there are no current policies regarding monitoring of adults within Home Sharing arrangements, CLBC, in conjunction with a number of agencies, are beginning to explore the need for something concrete from which to begin addressing this potentially problematic reality. This remains an area for attention and policy development.

CLBC is aware of the benefit of agencies providing residential services to adults with developmental disabilities, particularly when it comes to the degree of attention provided to the adult and the support provider. It is, however, somewhat financially advantageous for CLBC to continue to arrange direct contracts with home sharing providers. Currently, the average cost of supporting an adult through a direct contract Home Sharing residence is \$26,924 versus the

cost of contracting with an agency or organization for \$33,973.⁶ This is somewhat deceptive however as agency cost includes many of the opportunity, administrative and coordination costs which are otherwise covered by CLBC in direct contract arrangements. One part of this increased cost for agency contracts has to do with the contract negotiation. Agencies negotiate to hire and provide a coordinator, whose specific role is to visit with adults in their residences and make sure that the arrangement is satisfactory for both the adult and the support provider. The contact between the adult, the support provider, and the agency can also provide a closer relationship and may also lead to socialization opportunities in the community to deal with issues of isolation. It is often through the agency coordinator that both the adults with developmental disabilities and the support providers remain aware of others in their community with whom they can connect. It is this connection that can contribute to a network that adults, families and support providers can use for support.

All key informants indicated there was an absence of concrete or specific policies on the number of visits a staff member is to make to ensure an adult and support provider are doing well. The exception is the clear policy for the annual review of the placement. However, both RSCL and LACL meet with the Home Sharing provider and the adult a number of times throughout the year. Once the adult has been placed in a Home Sharing residence, a Coordinator provides regular checks with the adult and the support provider. However, "regular" has not been defined to outline neither the number of visits to be made annually nor the length of time between visits. Currently, policies are being developed to dictate a monthly contact standard.

At RSCL the full-time position of Coordinator attempts to meet with adults and Home Sharing providers once a month and has the job of ensuring that each of the 22 adult's needs are being met in the Home Sharing residence. This coordinator, at the very least, must conduct an annual Person-Centered Plan and Contract Review, which includes a safety checklist and a satisfaction survey. Should an emergency situation arise, RSCL has an emergency worker available on-call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In the case of an allegation or serious incident, there are written procedures provided to caregivers regarding who is to be notified, and how it will be investigated; if necessary, the adult will be moved from the Home Sharing placement to ensure their safety.²

LACL ensures that all of its caregivers are within the community of Langley as part of a safeguard of proximity so LACL staff can see every adult regularly. LACL has a "monthly or greater" policy of seeing the adults it works with, and most are seen daily or weekly through the day programs run by LACL. Day programs act as an additional means to ensure there is a very high level of engagement between LACL and the adult. For the support of new caregivers, LACL requires an even greater level of staff involvement, as well as involvement from the birth or adoptive family of the adult to ensure a network of support. However, some key informants indicated that agencies are cautious not to be too directing of the work of Home Sharing providers but to respect the home providers ability to provide support. This is a delicate balance when because it is a contractual relationship and monitoring is necessary to both ensure the adults safety.

Involvement of families, friends, community members, and the adult with LACL is also promoted through social events. And because "natural" families have participated throughout the entire screening process with LACL to select a caregiver, a highly involved relationship between the caregiver and the family commonly evolves from the beginning of the Home Sharing process.¹

ISSL maintains that home Sharing providers are always advised to document the care of adults in their home, such as critical incidents and report after an incident to their agency or ENVISION, prior to contacting CLBC.³ Currently CLBC conducts investigations on its own into Home Sharing settings following any non-criminal concerns and allegations. If the support provider is licensed, then the licensing board takes control of the investigation.

CLBC requires that all critical incidents are reported. However, for those Home Sharing providers who rarely meet with agency staff, remain isolated and are not in close contact with the agency coordinator, critical incidents could go both unnoticed and or unreported. Hence, due to the large number of support providers and lack of resources allocated for monitoring, if there are no telephone calls or "problems" in the home, Home Sharing residences can be left unmonitored for periods of time, often until an issue arises.

Respite Care within Home Sharing

Respite is a support that can work to maintain the relationship between adult and support provider and ultimately, the Home Sharing arrangement. Respite providers can either go into the home and relieve the support providers for a number of hours or days or the adult can go to the respite support provider's home so the support provider can remain in their home.²

Both LACL and RSCL have a roster of respite service providers the Home Sharing provider can access when they require a break from care giving.¹ A number of respite caregivers are provided with training by LACL and RSCL and work casually when required in an emergency. This roster of caregivers ensures someone trained is available should a placement break down or should an emergency arise. ISSL and CLBC do not provide training to their respite caregivers. Instead, caregivers are expected to recruit and train their own respite caregivers, who often end up being neighbors or family members.

As another respite option, LACL owns a home to which both the adult and the respite support provider can go. This home is especially useful in situations where the adult's behaviour occasionally leads to the destruction of property. LACL's home is also valuable in situations when an adult's placement relationship has broken down or the adult can no longer remain in the support provider's home and requires an immediate place to live. The house owned by LACL has a number of suites. In an emergency situation, a support provider can be placed with the adult in the residence until a more permanent residential placement can be found. This emergency option through LACL is not available through any of the other organizations interviewed.

Family Involvement

Perhaps the most important safeguard for adults in Home Sharing is the involvement of their biological or adoptive families in their every day lives. All key informants agreed that their organization encourages family members, friends and other community members to regularly visit the adult's Home Sharing residence and actively participate in the lives of adults.³ None of the agencies

and organizations interviewed had any specific rules, times or agreements with families regarding how often or what their involvement in the Home Sharing placement looks like. This appears to be verbally agreed upon by each Home Sharing provider, adult with a developmental disability, and his or her family members.

According to ISSL, families often assume the responsibility of contacting ISSL, the agency or CLBC if they believe support providers are not meeting certain standards or if there is something that needs to be changed with the support of their family member.³ Thus, active family member involvement also acts as an informal safeguard measure. In addition, community feedback from adults such as neighbors, day program staff, and other family members is usually reported to the agency or CLBC if they suspect any issues regarding the support an adult is receiving. Day programs provide regular opportunities to check in with adults in Home Sharing supports; data estimates demonstrate that approximately 80-90% of adults receiving Home Sharing supports also receive day supports⁶.

Quality of Life

Unfortunately, research in the area of quality of life outcomes related to Home Sharing is limited. In general, housing that resembles traditional family homes, is located in communities where adults have a social network and offers well-organized and directed levels of support are seen as essential conditions for promoting quality of life (Emerson, Robertson, Gregory, Kessissoglou, Hatton, Hallam, Knapp, Jarbrink, Netten & Lineham, 2000; Felce et al., 1998; Lowe, Felce, Perry, Baxter & Jones, 1998; Mansell, McGill & Emerson, 2001). In many ways,

Home Sharing holds similar features to living in the family home. Thus, it is possible to make some inferences about quality of life in Home Sharing based on quality of life findings for adults in family home living. Research demonstrates the potential for social isolation when living in the family home (see Lifshitz and Merrick, 2003; O'Rourke, Grey, Fuller, & McClean, 2004). Furthermore, older adults living with family reported a higher rate of loneliness, which contributed to their feelings of dissatisfaction with their current living situation (O'Rourke et al.). Thus, the potential for isolation in Home Sharing arrangements may also be an issue for awareness.

In addition, research has found that older adults living at home with family are less likely to report satisfaction with the availability of activities compared to those living in residential services (O'Rourke et al., 2004). Lifshitz and Merrick reported similar findings with older adults living in community housing reporting high levels of social and leisure activities compared to those living at home. Thus, community connectedness and participation in activities outside of the home are important issues to keep in mind when supporting adults in Home Sharing residences. However, given that provincial data estimates show that 80-90% of adults in Home Sharing arrangements also access day supports, participation in activities and community may be less of a concern for adults living in such settings compared to adults living in the family home.

Research in the area of residential options highlights important issues for consideration. While Home Sharing differs from the family home in many ways, there are also many similarities. It is possible that adults living within a Home Sharing arrangement may be less connected to formal supports, such as day

supports, which could translate into lower levels of participation in social activities and higher rates of loneliness. In addition, if formal programs/supports act as a means to monitor and ensure safety, happiness and satisfaction as explained earlier in this report, than those individuals not connected in such a way may be more vulnerable to unsafe and unsatisfactory living situations.

Breakdown and Termination

As previously mentioned, each agency and CLBC advised that if the relationship between the adult and the Home Sharing provider was to breakdown, the placement could be terminated and the adult could be moved. Although there is no time commitment for a support provider, LACL technically requires thirty days notice from the caregiver if the Home Sharing situation is not working out. This notice period, however, is flexible and in the past LACL has moved adults in one day, so as to not leave the adult in the home until the end of the contract.¹ Similar practices regarding thirty days notice take place at RSCL and ISSL.

ISSL described how, in order to prevent the movement of adults from homes prematurely, the agency becomes involved in the relationship between the adult and the Home Sharing provider. ENVISION has created a group of professionals newly termed the *Community Support Network* for those unlicensed Home Sharing providers to address incidents that do not require police involvement, but instead deal with the relationships between support providers, family members and adults.³ ENVISION's creation of the new *Community Support Network* is one way private Home Sharing residences are working to design a

formal method of resolving crises, ensuring the safety and well-being of adults, and assessing and preserving the relationships of adults and support providers.

Although this Community Support Network is only now being created formally, it has been operating to a lesser degree informally for some time.³ Agencies with ENVISION ask Home Sharing providers to contact them prior to contacting CLBC allowing ENVISION the opportunity to look into the situation. This has the benefit of extinguishing smaller issues and promoting continuity of support for adults; in past situations, CLBC has chosen to move the adult prematurely.³ For those crises that are small or more manageable and may only require some increased attention by the agency, mediation or negotiation, the Community Support Network has the ability to help maintain support arrangements. However, if the issue was to include an allegation of abuse then it becomes a criminal investigation; at this point, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) would be involved, and the adult is moved to another Home Sharing placement until the RCMP investigation was complete. Following these efforts, the Community Support Network and the agency assess whether the home is still an appropriate placement for adults with developmental disabilities in the future. This particular agency protocol, however, raises questions about the neutrality and objectivity which may be better provided by an external monitoring and investigation system responsible for ensuring the safety of the adults within the Home Sharing residence.

LACL also does not hesitate to terminate contracts with Home Sharing support providers if things do not appear to be working out or if the adult is unhappy in the placement. This flexibility and involvement with adults helps to

ensure that each person's residence is truly right for them. None of the organizations interviewed have current statistics of the average length of stay in a Home Sharing residence. However, some key informants spoke generally about the length of home sharing arrangements. For example, at ISSL it is quite common that adults will stay in a Home Sharing residence for up to 10 years before the provision of support is terminated.³ Furthermore, LACL's determination to find a good match between the adult and the caregiver tends to produce long-term arrangements.

Key informants identified some common features that can lead to the breakdown of arrangements. Some of these features included: supporting an adult who is up through the night as this leads to exhaustion on the part of the caregiver, an increase in health needs, and aggression on the part of the adult toward the caregiver. This information provides insight into who might not be best supported through the Home Sharing model.

Future Direction for Safeguards

As discussed earlier, many non-profit organizations are expressing concern regarding the quick shift toward placing increasing numbers of adults in Home Sharing living arrangements. Efforts to address particular issues of concern are taking place in the province. Recently, Daniel Collins, as co-chair to a new provincial focus group, created a document titled *Best Practices in Home Sharing Provincial Focus Group*, which proposed terms of reference for residential services.¹ This document was provided to CLBC and may be incorporated in future CLBC policies and standards for residential services for adults with developmental disabilities.⁵ In addition, an annual network meeting

of Executive Directors from non-profit organizations has recently produced a report outlining a vast list of recommendations for CLBC's management of Home Sharing in B.C. Some of these recommendations include the need for provincial standards for delivery of the model, clear definitions of relevant terms, best practice guidelines, networking and support opportunities such as training and semi-annual meetings and manuals for new Home Sharing support providers.

Also recommended to address issues related to Home Sharing is the development of a provincial protocol for monitoring and investigating complaints by an external monitoring system so as to better ensure the safety and well-being of every adult living in a Home Sharing environment. Currently, there is a draft of standards being formulated by ENVISION for Home Sharing residences and support providers in B.C. As mentioned earlier, when CLBC took over the support of adults placed in Home Sharing homes from MCFD, many agencies, including ENVISION, adopted the standards previously set by MCFD; for many support providers these are what act as a guide today. ENVISION is also working with CLBC to create an orientation and training package for private Home Sharing providers.³ This is an extremely important step for private agencies, as it appears that many private agencies providing Home Sharing have no set standards for monitoring homes.

Current Directions for Home Sharing Policies/ Standards

CLBC is currently developing standards and policies that the agencies and organizations providing Home Sharing to adults will be required to follow, however, at this time there are no provincial standards for unlicensed Home Sharing residences.⁴ The developing standards and policies are based on

consultations with four agencies: Delta Community Living Society, Communitas Supportive Care Society (formerly Mennonite Central Committee), Semiahmoo House Society and the Richmond Association for Community Living.⁴ Roberta Scott of ENVISION has also been consulted.³ Recently, LACL and RSCL have begun meeting with ISSL and CLBC to collectively work towards agreed upon standards and policies for their Home Sharing. Following this community input, CLBC's standards are being rewritten in an attempt to "level the playing field" and provide for a basic standard of support for all people with developmental disabilities in B.C.⁴ However, agencies are likely better able to provide higher standard levels than direct contracts through CLBC given the staffing and organizational differences associated with agencies (e.g. a coordinator responsible for Home Sharing check ins).

CLBC recently published *Standards for Home Sharing, a Monitoring Tool for Home Sharing, Health and Safety Checklist for Home Sharing* and *Successful Practices for Home Sharing Services*, all of which are the first draft for every Home Sharing residence funded by CLBC. It is not known when these standards are expected to be implemented.

There are also a number of policies between CLBC and the agencies it contracts with regarding the provision of funding for support providers. For example, these policies include a portion of the funding for adults with developmental disabilities to be allocated for respite care. Some private agencies, such as ISSL, in turn have policies with Home Sharing home providers regarding respite care, such as the requirement of receipts for approximately 6% percent of the total monthly support payment allocated for respite services.³

CLBC, however, does not check with caregivers to see how and where money provided for respite care is being spent⁵ and CLBC has noted that “there is scope for providers to use their initiative to enhance their net earnings.”¹²

As previously stated, although non-profit organizations such as LACL and RSCL have created policies and standards regarding the provision and training of respite support providers, there are no current provincial standards or policies regarding the provision of respite for Home Sharing support providers in direct contracts with CLBC. For private agencies providing Home Sharing, CLBC has created new *Guidelines for Agencies Providing Home Sharing/ Live in Support* that involve the recruitment expectations of Criminal Record Checks and proof of first aid and a driver’s license. CLBC does expect that Home Sharing providers in direct contracts with CLBC will arrange their own respite caregivers. CLBC also expects that “if the Home Sharing provider elects to hire employees to provide respite, it should be noted in the contract that the provider is required to comply with standards.”¹⁰ CLBC does not, however, check on home providers to ensure that the respite staff have been adequately screened or have provided Criminal Record Checks to the home provider.

Ultimately, all respite support services are organized, arranged and monitored by the home provider and not by CLBC. For these and any Home Sharing settings, CLBC does not, however, have any guidelines regarding the training for providers or respite caregivers (such as how to properly conduct bathroom transfers, administration of medication and managing difficult behaviour). Based on this gap in policy, extended family members, neighbors or informal caregivers can provide respite services to the Home Sharing residence.

This is another process that remains unregulated and is not monitored by CLBC or by an external body.

Another step CLBC is looking to take in the future is to determine a plan to help and support adults “age in place” as the current availability of residential support for seniors with developmental disabilities is leading to increased waitlists and a stress on the system. The degree to which, if any, the cost towards an adult's support as (s)he ages within a Home Sharing situation remains unclear and is something that requires further exploration. Most medical needs, however, are provided through generic medical services within B.C.'s public healthcare system.

Recommendations

1. Distinguish between ‘traditional’ home sharing (i.e. one or in exceptional cases, two persons living in a residence which is the primary home of the support provider) from other types of residential support (i.e. roommates, more than two supported persons, etc.).
2. Complete work on shared set of values and principles and provincial practice standards and safeguards for all home sharing arrangements including required background checks, process of recruitment, home/caregiver study, monitoring frequency, natural family involvement and termination.
3. Establish system of external agency oversight for all home sharing arrangements responsible for administration, recruitment, monitoring and networking.

4. Set standard fee scales for recruitment, screening and monitoring of all home sharing arrangements at a rate reasonable to ensure appropriate processes and sufficient monitoring of home sharing arrangements on a ratio appropriate to the arrangements and determined in consultation with the agencies and providers (1:35 is generally cited as a reasonable ratio by agency providers).
5. Consider phasing out all direct contracts by CLBC in favour of agency managed supports or contracting for monitoring of direct contracts by external agency.
6. End practice of global contracts for two + arrangements in favour of individualized contracts linked to individualized plan.
7. Global contracts may be considered for arrangements of 3+ but these should be treated as group homes in all but exceptional circumstances and an individual plan should be in place for all residents.
8. Consideration should be given to phasing out or redrafting *Guide to Support Allocation* in consultation with agencies and providers *in favour of* individualized plans and standard fee scales per unit of support.
9. Establish process for negotiating modification to contracts to address changing needs of the person to allow the option of continued residence in a home sharing arrangement when changed needs cannot be met with in initial contract terms.
10. Establish standard fee scale for respite based on individual needs and negotiated at time of placement.

11. Establish standard requirements for insurance cover and include cost in contracts along with reporting mechanisms to ensure compliance.
12. Clarify CLBC facilitator roles which should include:
 - a. Ensure individual plan is developed and implemented with particular attention to those non-residential supports required by individuals in home sharing arrangements;
 - b. Mandatory reporting of all allegations or suspicion of abuse or critical incidents to a Quality Service Analyst by agencies and providers who should then inform a facilitator to coordinate changes to support arrangements if required;
 - c. Liaison with oversight agency to update on progress in implementing individual plan;
 - d. Provide quick response to placement breakdown on short notice;
 - e. Be available to the individual or their family to discuss concerns.
13. Continue work on training for agencies and providers of home sharing to ensure both preparatory and ongoing training opportunities are available including training on conducting home studies of potential home sharing providers.
14. Improve record keeping on home sharing arrangements to ensure basic data is available on:
 - a. numbers in arrangements including breakdown of how many per setting;
 - b. regional demographics;
 - c. length of home sharing arrangements;

- d. cost;
 - e. reasons for breakdown
15. Consider further research comparing quality and cost of home sharing arrangements to support models of similar size (i.e. roommates, individual support arrangements in home owned or with tenancy by the person receiving support).

Summary

Home Sharing is a major part of the restructuring of residential support for people with developmental disabilities in British Columbia. There is evidence that when done properly and with due care and attention, it is a choice that many individuals and families will value. There remain however a number of unresolved concerns, particularly regarding the ability to ensure the safety and well-being of adults in these settings.

As more and more adults are being placed through Home Sharing, likewise the urgency for a clearer picture of how adult's needs are being met within their Home Sharing residence is a growing requirement. Creating clear outcome measures to obtain information about how the Home Sharing model is and is not working will enable planning to work to improve the model. By working collectively, CLBC and agencies such as LACL, RACL, ENVISION and ISSL appear to be taking steps toward providing a forum for creating policies for all Home Sharing across the province. This process needs to continue with some urgency given the rapid growth in this model. This report seeks to inform and assist this process to ensure that home sharing is both safe, efficient and most

importantly, meets the needs and aspirations of individuals who choose these options and their families.

Endnotes

1. LACL. Daniel Collins. Executive Director of Langley Association for Community Living
2. RSCL. Janice Barr. Executive Director of Richmond Society for Community Living
3. ISSL. Roberta Scott. President of Integra Support Services Limited and Executive Director of ENVISION
4. CLBC. Paula Grant. Policy Analyst at Community Living British Columbia
5. CLBC. Jacinta Eni. Project Manager of Residential Options Project at Community Living British Columbia
6. Information received from Allan Lamoureaux, CLBC Manager of Decision Support Services. Personal Communication. September 2007.
7. Set of Community Living Values
8. Agencies that require accreditation from CLBC are those that receive over \$500,000 in funding.
9. Descriptors of A, B, C, D and E of provincial funding levels for people with developmental disabilities in BC
10. CLBC Residential Options Project pamphlet "Conversion of an Existing Unionized Group Home to a Home Sharing Model"
11. Report on January 2007 Forum on Family Care- Family Life Models. BC Association for Community Living Executive Director's Network.
12. CLBC Notation (pg.4) of Appendix 1- Factors in Determining the Status of a Worker or Contractor (Canada Revenue Agency).

13. Community Living British Columbia (2006). Adult Services Regional Quarterly Report: March 2006.

Additional Resources

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/assisted/index.html>

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/assisted/pdf/guide.pdf>

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