



THE WATCHDOG

Newsletter

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Minister accepts all 60 Ombudsman recommendations to help adults with developmental disabilities in crisis

Ontario's systemic failure to help desperate families who are unable to care for loved ones with developmental disabilities has left vulnerable people in dire and often dangerous circumstances, Ombudsman Paul Dubé reveals in his office's latest report, released August 24.



In *Nowhere to Turn*, the Ombudsman reports on his office's investigation of more than 1,400 complaints from families of adults with developmental disabilities who are in crisis situations, including being abandoned, abused, unnecessarily hospitalized and jailed.



AUGUST 2016

The Ombudsman investigates public complaints about Ontario government agencies and broader public sector organizations. The office oversees more than 1,000 provincial ministries, agencies, tribunals, boards, commissions and Crown corporations, as well as school boards, municipalities and universities. Ombudsman Paul Dubé began his five-year term on April 1.

[FILE A COMPLAINT ONLINE](#)

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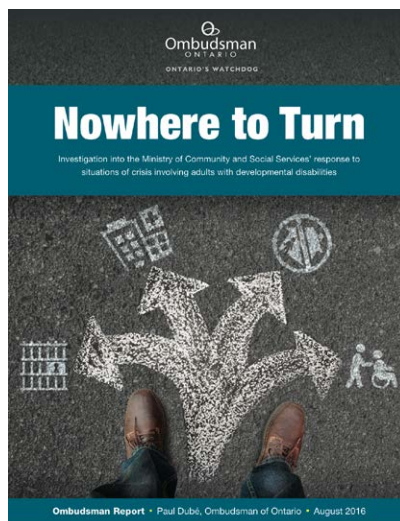
CLOSED MEETINGS

Township of Woolwich: The

The Ombudsman made 60 recommendations, highlighting an urgent need for greater supports, services, and more rigorous monitoring, all of which were accepted by the Minister of Community and Social Services.

- › [Read the full report](#)
- › [Read the press release](#)
- › [Read the facts and highlights](#)
- › [Watch the Minister's response](#)

The report details 18 cases of adults with developmental disabilities and complex needs who were left homeless, abused, abandoned, or inappropriately housed in hospitals, long-term care facilities and jails. One 24-year-old man lived for months in a long-term care home, where he injured one senior and was molested by another; another man with autism spent 12 years in psychiatric units. One woman who couldn't remain in an abusive home was moved 20 times in 34 days; another was abandoned by an exhausted, ill relative after two of her other caregivers died.



John lived in a hospital – at a cost of \$417 a day – for nearly a year after his family was unable to care for him because of his harmful behaviour. A residence was found after our Office and the hospital's CEO intervened with the Ministry.

- Ontario Ombudsman report, *Nowhere to Turn*, Paras 180-193

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These “extreme and egregious cases” amount to “a modern-day version of institutionalization,” Mr. Dubé says in the report.

The Special Ombudsman Response Team's investigation involved interviews with more than 200 families and officials, and the review of more than 25,000 documents, including similar probes by coroner's inquests and Ontario's Auditor General. Ombudsman staff also worked to resolve individual crisis situations as they arose – including helping move 20 people from hospitals to more suitable homes. [Read more](#)

In the News

- › [Province must fix 'deeply flawed' system to help people with developmental disabilities, ombudsman says \(Toronto Star\)](#)
- › [Ontario ombudsman calls for systematic overhaul of care for adults with](#)

Ombudsman found no evidence that a closed meeting on an upcoming delegation had a quorum of the committee behind closed doors, or laid the groundwork for a decision on the delegation. [Read the report](#)

Municipality of Brockton (Walkerton BIA): The Ombudsman found that the June discussion fit within the exception for litigation or potential litigation and did not contravene the *Municipal Act, 2001*. [Read the letter](#)

BACK TO SCHOOL BLUES?

We oversee school boards, universities, colleges, and OSAP. If you have an unresolved issue, we can help. [Read more](#)

A MESSAGE FROM THE OMBUDSMAN



What's new at our office? Check out the [Ombudsman's latest post](#) about his most recent speeches and reports, and other activities by our team.

REACHING OUT

The Ombudsman attended the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference in Windsor in mid-August. He and members of our staff spoke with representatives for more than 80 municipalities, answering questions and providing them with materials about the office. As he noted on Twitter – “It's been a productive & engaging few days meeting municipal stakeholders at

[developmental disabilities \(CBC News\)](#)

- › [Ombudsman releases report into help for adults with developmental disabilities \(Ottawa Community News\)](#)
- › [Treatment of adults with developmental disabilities 'deeply flawed': Ombudsman \(Ottawa Citizen\)](#)
- › [Ontario must fix 'deeply flawed' system to help people with developmental disabilities, ombudsman says \(Toronto Star\)](#)
- › [Heartbreaking cycle for those with developmental disabilities needs to end \(Toronto Sun\)](#)
- › [Toronto Star editorial: Province must act immediately to support people with developmental disabilities \(Toronto Star\)](#)

In a report released in late June, [A Matter of Life and Death](#), the Ombudsman also made 22 recommendations for the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to save lives by ensuring police are better trained to use de-escalation techniques before resorting to lethal force.

These two reports, *A Matter of Life and Death* and *Nowhere to Turn*, had a combined **82** recommendations to government, which will help fix provincewide systemic problems. As Mr. Dubé noted recently during a press conference, accepting these recommendations indicates that "[government] sees the value we can add in helping them maximize service to Ontarians." The Ombudsman will monitor the ministries' progress on implementing the recommendations, which include reporting back to his office at regular intervals.

Broader public sector: Recent cases

It's a new milestone: We've received more than **3,000** complaints about municipalities, universities, and school boards since our jurisdiction over those sectors came into effect. We've had **683** school board complaints since September 1, and since January 1, we've received **2,155** complaints about municipalities and **166** about universities. The bulk of these cases have been resolved informally, usually through referral to local officials.

School boards: A woman complained to us after she and her husband received a 'Notice of Prohibition of Entry' from a board in October 2012, with no end date or written rationale provided. Our Office confirmed that the Director of Education had the authority to issue the notice, but that the school board should have clearer policies and procedures around trespass notices. The board agreed to develop procedures to address future incidents and share their procedure with our Office.

In another case, a student complained that one of his female classmates was refused entry into class for having her shoulders exposed. He emailed the school board and, not receiving a response, reached out to our Office. Our staff facilitated communication between the school board and the youth, who was satisfied with the board's response.

Municipalities: A woman applied for Ontario Works benefits and was told she qualified for \$1,850 to cover the first and last month's rent payments for an apartment she was moving into in August. However, a short time later, she was told she only qualified for

[#AMOCNF16](#). I plan to attend more [@AMOpolicy](#) conferences in future and stay informed of issues faced by municipalities."

Investigative training in Iqaluit: Our two general counsel, Wendy Ray and Laura Pettigrew, were invited to visit Iqaluit, Nunavut to provide investigative training to staff from the territory's Representative for Children and Youth.



[The Association of Francophone Municipalities of Ontario](#): On September 21, the Ombudsman will be speaking at the Association of Francophone Municipalities of Ontario's annual conference and we'll have team members at our booth to answer your questions.

OMBUDSMAN 101

The Ombudsman spoke at the Ontario Secondary School Teacher's Federation Annual Leadership Training on August 18. [Watch or read the speech here](#).



WANT TO WORK WITH US?

We're always looking for talented people to join our **investigations**, **early resolutions**, and **legal** teams. Learn more about early resolutions [here](#). Learn about investigations [here](#).

\$825 - the cost of the first month's rent - and wouldn't receive it until the end of the month. Meanwhile, the woman had moved out of her previous apartment on July 31 and was staying in a hotel with her 15-year-old daughter. Our Office intervened to ask why the funding amount changed, and why a funding recipient would only receive a rent payment at the end of the month. When it reviewed the file, local Ontario Works officials found two errors that had impacted the funding, including an error stating the woman had a place to live until the end of August. Ontario Works immediately arranged to send the money to the woman's landlord, and she moved into her new apartment.

[Check out our brochures](#) to learn more about municipal, university and school board complaints, or [fill out a complaint form here](#).

Have a complaint about a municipality? [Read this first](#)

Have a complaint about a university? [Read this first](#)

Have a complaint about a school board? [Read this first](#)



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