

December 14, 2015

Honourable Sherry Gambin-Walsh
Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services,
Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development,
Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation,
and Minister Responsible for Status of Persons with Disabilities

Dear Minister Gambin-Walsh:

I am honoured to welcome you to your role as Minister of Child, Youth and Family Services, Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, and Minister Responsible for Status of Persons with Disabilities. We have been given an extraordinary opportunity to serve the people of our province and together we will work to create a stronger tomorrow for Newfoundland and Labrador. Over the next four years, we will fulfill our commitments, building on the trust placed in us on November 30, 2015. We shall, without fail, act with integrity in all aspects of our service, striving for excellence in discharging our responsibilities.

Embarking on this journey together, we will be guided by *A Stronger Tomorrow: Our Five Point Plan* to Restore Openness, Transparency and Accountability; Build a Stronger, Smarter Economy; Improve Health and Healthcare; Support Safe and Sustainable Communities; and Invest in Our Future Through Education.

As Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador I expect you to follow the principles of openness, transparency and accountability. It is my intention to ensure policy decisions in government are informed by research, evidence, and evaluation so that citizens can understand how and why decisions are made. It is critical that our government's decisions are also informed by engagement with stakeholders, including our Aboriginal partners, to ensure everyone's voices are heard.

Our government is committed to modernizing our province's legislative process in accordance with these principles and I call upon you to engage your fellow Members, constituents and the general public; avail of the Committee process of the House of Assembly; and seek opportunities for non-partisan cooperation.

We are also committed to creating an environment that captures the full potential of our province's many riches, through diversification, job creation and growth. We will take action to improve the health and well-being of people, empower sustainable community development, protect public safety and advance educational opportunities and outcomes.

Our province is facing significant fiscal challenges that require our collective leadership and the engagement of the public. Together, our government will lead our province towards a more sustainable, economic future.

The protection and care of vulnerable children and youth is a core value of our government and the work of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services is critical in this regard. As Minister, I expect you to oversee all aspects of the department's mandate, including the following:

Youth Services Program

Some young people need extra help as they transition to adulthood. Services for vulnerable youth should not discriminate based on whether a child was in the care of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services when they turned 16. You are directed to review the Youth Services Program to ensure that the program is responsive to the unique needs of vulnerable youth.

Deaths and Critical Incidents - Children and Youth

I expect you to work with your colleagues and the Child and Youth Advocate to develop legislation for the House of Assembly that will make it mandatory to report deaths and critical incidents to the Advocate.

As Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, you will be focused on important issues related to seniors and aging, health promotion, wellness and sport, persons with disabilities and the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Seniors

By 2025, one in four Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be seniors. As part of our plan to support seniors, you will lead the development of legislation to create a Seniors Advocate Office, which will be independent of government, and report to the House of Assembly. You must also build upon the work being done in our communities to improve transportation options for seniors so they can not only access healthcare services more readily, but participate more fully in their communities.

Health Promotion and Healthy Living

Working with your colleagues, I expect you to lead our government's development of a health promotion and healthy living strategy in collaboration with the Minister of Health and Community Services. This must include investments in health promotion, healthy living programs, and early intervention. Our goals are to reduce acute healthcare costs in the long term and help to achieve a healthy population in the province. You are directed to implement specific programs to facilitate healthy lifestyles and youth wellness. Your work should include:

- Promoting healthy eating habits through a combination of awareness campaigns and community outreach;
- Offering wellness coaching in schools beginning with Kindergarten children; and,
- Implementing anti-smoking programs, including support for organizations that offer smoking cessation programs.

As a government, we need to work diligently to ensure that accessible and affordable housing is available throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. As Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, you must improve housing options and conditions for low to moderate income households.

Housing Strategy

Affordability and availability of housing continues to be a major issue in our province. There is a need to develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with housing concerns such as homelessness and the increased needs of seniors. You will lead the development of a new provincial housing strategy that will address both the affordability and availability of housing options, paying particular attention to the needs of seniors and youth.

Furthermore, you will also explore new opportunities to partner with municipalities to retrofit subsidized housing.

As Minister Responsible for Status of Persons with Disabilities you must work with your colleagues to make sure that people with disabilities are included in all aspects of society.

Persons with Disabilities

We must work with advocacy groups and community stakeholders to promote a more inclusive Newfoundland and Labrador. In collaboration with your colleagues, I expect you to lead a review of existing legislation and regulations in the province with the goal of enacting a new inclusion-based *Disabilities Act*.

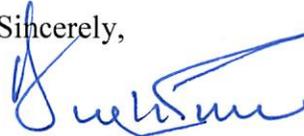
In fulfilling your responsibility as Minister you must ensure collaboration, in a positive and constructive manner, with your Cabinet colleagues. I take this opportunity to remind you that as you carry out your responsibilities, as a Member of the House of Assembly and Member of Cabinet, adhering to the Code of Conduct and the Conflict of Interest guidelines are mandatory, to ensure you discharge your duties with the highest ethical standards.

Deputy Ministers are your key source of support and will provide you with non-partisan advice in meeting your responsibilities. I expect you to develop a positive, respectful and trusting relationship with your Deputy Minister and the public service. I would also ask that you be mindful that Deputy Ministers, among their various responsibilities, are ultimately accountable to me, through the Clerk of the Executive Council.

Our government will report back to the public annually on the achievement of our commitments and make adjustments as required. As a Minister you are accountable for achieving these priorities and meeting other responsibilities within your Department.

Together, we will provide strong leadership to deliver the change we need to move beyond today's challenges and on to a stronger tomorrow.

Sincerely,



DWIGHT BALL

Premier