

November 4, 2019

The Honourable Lisa Dempster
Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development
Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation
Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Dear Minister Dempster:

I look forward to continuing to work with you in your roles as Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, and Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities. As you move forward in your work, I am confident that you will work to protect children and seniors in our province, ensure affordable housing for those in need and advance social development, including reducing poverty and building inclusive communities. Your department is essential to ensuring an inclusive, accessible and socially advanced province that values its children, youth, families, seniors and all individuals across the lifespan.

We received a mandate from the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to continue on the course we have set out, in collaboration and cooperation with all members of our House of Assembly. We are committed to working together to make Newfoundland and Labrador a better place to live, to work, and to raise a family. We are building on the work advanced as part of our plan for sustainability and growth, The Way Forward. Moving into the next four years, we remain focused on growing the economy while ensuring fiscal sustainability in a balanced and thoughtful manner. We envision a better economy, healthier people, better living and a bright future. To deliver on this plan, below are some of the activities I am asking you to lead:

Child Protection

- Overseeing the implementation of the new **Children, Youth and Families Act**;
- Exploring service options to create or improve: in-home wrap around supports to families whose children are in need of protection with the goal of supporting at risk children at home; the options available for, and cost of, out-of-home residential care; and strategies to facilitate getting children home or to a permanent home;
- In keeping with the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Innu Leadership, participating in the forthcoming inquiry into the treatment, experiences and outcomes of Innu in the child protection system, in collaboration with the Minister of Justice and Public Safety and the Government of Canada;

- In collaboration with the Nunatsiavut Government, other government departments and community partners, developing and implementing a response plan to the recommendations included in the Independent Review of Child Protection Services to Inuit Children in Newfoundland and Labrador to improve outcomes for Inuit children, youth and families;
- Conducting a comprehensive review of the **Adoption Act, 2013** to consider areas that may require amendment; and,
- Continuing to strengthen child protection services to children, youth and families through monitoring of the implementation of the Structured Decision Making clinical model and addressing any associated training requirements for social work staff.

Seniors and Aging

- Delivering a new Seniors' Social Inclusion grant program that will provide up to \$2,000 for seniors groups to enhance their programming, as approved in Budget 2019;
- Completing a review of the **Adult Protection Act** to consider areas that may require amendments; and,
- Continuing to promote and provide the Age Friendly Communities Program to assist communities to plan for population aging.

Persons with Disabilities

- Continuing to work with partners to develop and deliver new provincial accessibility legislation.

Healthy Living Sport and Recreation

- Beginning the legislative process, including public and stakeholder consultations, to pursue Rowan's Law to best protect youth from concussions in sport;
- Finalizing and beginning the implementation of a Healthy Active Living Action Plan;
- Increasing public health promotion, awareness, education and prevention measures in areas such as smoking cessation and youth vaping, chronic disease management, breastfeeding, healthy eating, and increased physical activity;
- Piloting the new draft school food guidelines in the 2019-20 school year and assessing for full implementation in the 2020-21 school year; and,
- Continuing to work with the Canada Games Secretariat to further the hosting of the 2025 Canada Games.

Poverty Reduction, Prevention and Improved Wellbeing

- Leading development of an action plan on prevention and early intervention for families that will coordinate government efforts, focus on community partnerships, and identify opportunities to improve outcomes for all children and youth so they can develop to their full potential. This will include supporting vulnerable families to help prevent the need for becoming involved in the child protection system.

Housing

- Working closely with our community partners to help improve access to affordable housing, including investments in modernizing or renovating public housing units, and delivering the Home Energy Savings Program in collaboration with the Minister

- of Municipal Affairs and Environment to help make homes more affordable and fight climate change;
- Continuing to support transition houses and emergency shelters; and,
 - Developing a comprehensive provincial Housing and Homelessness Plan.

Tremendous progress has been made in Newfoundland and Labrador because of the work we have undertaken with our industry, cultural and community partners. These partnerships have enabled us to strengthen our resource industries and knowledge-based sectors, modernize health and social supports, and focus on improving educational outcomes for our youngest residents. However, our work does not stop there; we still have much work ahead of us to create a better economy, improve the health outcomes of residents, strengthen living conditions, and ultimately give Newfoundlanders and Labradorians a brighter future.

In addition to the items outlined above, our Cabinet is also collectively responsible for delivering on all of the commitments and targets set out in The Way Forward. Achieving these actions is critical to attaining inclusive growth, improving employment levels and creating the conditions necessary for job creation, reducing poverty, improving the health and wellbeing of everyone in our province, and realizing financial sustainability. It is essential that we work together to consider the health impacts of all our decisions as part of our Health in All Policies commitment.

I expect you to continue to be collaborative, open, accountable and transparent as you implement your duties. We will continue to use evidence, research, gender-based analysis plus, and engage with the public, stakeholders and our Indigenous partners, to inform our decisions. We are focused on service excellence and will continue to respond to the needs of the people of this great province.

In fulfilling your responsibility as Minister, I expect you to continue to show collaboration in a positive and constructive manner with your Cabinet colleagues and our peers in the House of Assembly.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are counting on us to make progress. We will continue to report publicly on our activities on our Way Forward website. Together, we will improve health, social and economic outcomes, and deliver high quality services for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Our future is bright and together we can make our beautiful, rich and diverse province an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

Sincerely,



DWIGHT BALL
Premier