

September 15, 2020

The Honourable Brian Warr  
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 Warr:

Congratulations on your appointment 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 advance activities in the interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I am confident that you will work to ensure the delivery of critical services to protect children and vulnerable adults, foster social development in our province, and build 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 life span.

This year has been marked by economic and social turmoil not only in Newfoundland and Labrador but around the world. But with great challenges come great opportunities. Through focused efforts I know that we will overcome these challenges and emerge as a stronger, more caring, more compassionate, and more diverse province. Future generations will judge us not based on the size of the challenges we faced but on how we have solidified the financial, social, and economic foundation of our province. Our Government has a responsibility to respond swiftly, decisively, and effectively. The time for action is now.

The economic status quo is no longer acceptable. We need to move away from the well-worn economic cycles of boom and bust and foster an economy that is diversified and sustainable. We need to reinvigorate our economy to harness the great potential that lies in our technology sector, our world-class arts sector, and every other sector from oil and gas to tourism, from fisheries and aquaculture to forestry and agrifoods. I know that the people of our province work hard in these and other sectors and the Government must work equally as hard for the people.

Our work to create a robust, stable economy will provide a firm foundation to ensure the delivery of vital social and other services to residents of the province. Our Government must always be mindful of the needs of the most vulnerable in our society and must ensure that quality social services are available and accessible to Newfoundlanders and

Labradorians. To ensure our Government is meeting this need, a Gender-Based Plus Analysis must be integrated into all policies and proposals.

The business of government must also advance from the status quo. We need to reimagine how government works so that it works for the people. This change is long overdue and it will be transformational.

In particular, I am tasking you to work with your colleagues in Cabinet, with all members of the House of Assembly, and with your departmental officials to advance the following priorities.

I expect you to review existing actions related to housing and food insecurity, poverty reduction and lead development of a renewed strategy to reduce poverty in consultation with stakeholders, experts, and communities.

You will also review the offerings of child protection services and lead 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. In this role, you will also oversee the continued implementation of the new Children, Youth and Families Act. I task you to address issues important to the health and well-being of children and youth in our province and, in particular, as identified by the Office of the Child Youth Advocate.

In keeping with the memorandum of understanding signed between Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Innu leadership, participate in the forthcoming inquiry into the treatment, experiences and outcomes of Innu in the child protection system. This work will be done in collaboration with the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, the Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, and the Government of Canada.

In collaboration with the Nunatsiavut Government, other government departments and community partners, develop and implement 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.

I task you to address issues important to seniors throughout the province and, in particular, as identified by the Seniors' Advocate. Please complete a review of the Adult Protection Act to consider areas that may require amendment and continue to promote the Age Friendly Communities Program to assist communities to plan for population aging.

As Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities, continue to work with partners to develop and deliver new provincial accessibility legislation. Please continue to engage, support, and partner with the diversity of stakeholders who support individuals living with disabilities and who promote inclusive and accessible communities. Ensure

that all policy and legislative work is grounded in the principle of “nothing about us without us”. I ask you to work toward the establishment of an Advocate for Persons with Disabilities in our province.

In your role as Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, I ask you to work 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 Environment, Climate Change and Municipalities to help make homes more affordable and fight climate change.

Please continue to support transition houses and emergency shelters and develop a comprehensive provincial Housing and Homelessness Plan in collaboration with other ministers addressing social systemic barriers related to homelessness, along with community stakeholders working directly with individuals experiencing housing insecurity.

I trust that you will be collaborative, honest, respectful, and transparent in your role as a minister. I also expect that you will hold yourself to the highest standards of ethical conduct and act at all times with integrity. Individually and collectively, we have a responsibility to seek out the best advice and the best ideas and to implement actions only in the interests of the people of our great province. We must be guided by evidence and research and take into account diverse perspectives as we make our decisions.

We cannot change our past but we can shape our future. It is our job to build the bright future that our province and its people deserve.

Yours truly,



**DR. ANDREW FUREY**  
Premier