

Children, Seniors and Social Development

STRATEGIC PLAN

2017-20





MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister responsible for the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD), I am pleased to present the department's Strategic Plan for the period April 1, 2017 - March 31, 2020.

CSSD was created in August 2016 by combining the former Departments of Child, Youth and Family Services and Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. The department was created to be responsive to the needs of all residents, and places a strong focus on the well-being of individuals. By creating the new department, people in the province will benefit from access to a wide range of services from a family-focused department, which concentrates on nurturing strong, healthy communities and supporting individuals and families throughout their lives.

The Department is guided by Government's overarching vision, **The Way Forward**, and is working to meet its commitments which focus on supporting individuals, families and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador in achieving better health and social well-being within a more inclusive society, the ongoing review of the **Children and Youth Care and Protection Act**, and improving the performance of the child protection services.

This plan is submitted in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. As Minister, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan, and the achievement of the specific goals and objectives contained herein.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sherry Gambin-Walsh". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the main text of the message.

Honourable Sherry Gambin-Walsh
Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development

Departmental Overview

The Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD) was formed on August 17, 2016, by combining the former Departments of Child, Youth and Family Services, and Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. This department was created to bring together a wide range of professionals and policy practitioners to focus on improving the health, safety, well-being, inclusion and social development of the people in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Department fulfills this mandate through its lines of business:

- Adoptions;
- Adult Protection;
- Seniors and Aging;
- Child Protection and In-care;
- Community Youth Corrections;
- Disability Policy;
- Healthy Living;
- Poverty Reduction;
- Sport and Recreation; and
- Youth Services.

Staff and Budget

As of April 2017, the Department had 702 permanent, 26 temporary and 4 contractual positions. The Provincial Office has 93 positions located at Confederation Building in St. John's which carry out work in all of the identified lines of business. For efficient service delivery of child and youth services, the department is structured as follows:

- Central-West Region – 283 positions (with offices located in: Baie Verte, Bay Roberts, Bonavista, Botwood, Channel-Port aux Basques, Clarenville,

Conception Bay South, Conne River, Corner Brook, Deer Lake, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Harbour Breton, Harbour Grace, Holyrood, Lewisporte, Marystown, Musgrave Harbour, Placentia, Roddickton, Springdale, St. Alban's, St. Anthony, Stephenville, Summerford, Whitbourne, and Woody Point).

- Labrador Region – 117 positions (with offices located in: Cartwright, Forteau, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Hopedale, Labrador City, Makkovik, Nain, Natuashish, Rigolet and Sheshatshiu).
- Metro Region – 235 positions (with offices located in Bell Island, Ferryland and St. John's).

The Department also operates a training centre in Happy Valley – Goose Bay (which includes a swimming pool) and two swimming pools – one in Gander and one in Corner Brook – co-located with Arts and Culture Centres. The Gander, Corner Brook and Happy Valley-Goose Bay Recreation Centres have fewer than five permanent positions and a number of casual positions.

The Department's 2017-18 budget is \$170,855,400 and includes \$16,262,300 in anticipated revenue.

	2017-18 Estimates (\$)	2016-17 Revised (\$)
Expenditures	170,855,400	173,127,400
Revenue	(16,262,300)	(16,226,900)
Net Expenditure	154,593,100	156,900,500

Issue One - Safety and Protection of Children and Youth

In **The Way Forward**, Government committed to identifying strategies to improve performance in children's protection and in care services. In recent years, the number of children and youth in the In Care program has increased despite a declining population of children in Newfoundland and Labrador and a declining number of families requiring Protective Intervention services. The Department works to make sure that every child in care has a timely plan in place to ensure the child's ongoing safety, health and well-being. Supporting permanency planning for children in care is a high priority for the department.

Government recognizes the critical role foster families play in the child protection system. While the number of children who require a safe and supportive foster family has increased, the number of foster families has not increased proportionately. The Department is continuing to work with foster families and the Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association to ensure children who require out of home care receive the services and supports they require. The Department also works with a non-profit residential care partner to provide family-based care placements for large sibling groups and children with complex needs. The Department will engage with frontline staff and conduct research to identify best and promising practices in child welfare that address factors impacting program performance. This research and engagement will inform efforts to improve child protection services and are key initiatives toward the longer-term goal of improving outcomes for vulnerable children and youth in the province.

GOAL:

By March 31, 2020, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development will have improved the performance of Child Protection Services.

Indicators:

- Enhanced permanency planning for children/youth in the Protective Intervention and In Care programs
- Strengthened programs and services for children, youth and families
- Reviewed and strengthened child protection legislation
- Reviewed and assessed placement resources for children and youth

Objective 1:

By March 31, 2018, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development will have identified actions required to address the issue of continued program growth in child protection and in care services.

Indicators:

- Completed a jurisdictional and literature review of best and promising practices in child protection
- Engaged with front line staff on factors contributing to program growth and improving performance
- Reviewed the **Children and Youth Care and Protection Act**
- Reviewed the supports and services provided to families
- Reviewed the Youth Services program

Objective 2:

By March 31, 2019, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development will have initiated action plans to address the issue of continued program growth in children's protection and in care services.

Objective 3:

By March 31, 2020, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development will have further strengthened programs and services for children, youth and families.

Issue Two - A Healthier and Inclusive Tomorrow

The current health status and lifestyle behaviours of people in Newfoundland and Labrador are leading to a less healthy and more costly future. Healthier eating and being physically active can significantly improve health. For persons living with low income and among at-risk populations, it can reduce health disparities. While the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council was dissolved in January 2017, options are being explored to engage continued advice to the Minister on healthy active living.

In **The Way Forward**, Government has committed to achieving better health outcomes through healthy living initiatives in the following action areas: 1) increasing awareness and engaging individuals to take action for healthy living; 2) creating communities that support healthy living; and 3) engaging schools to create settings that support healthy living and learning. Through The Way Forward Healthy Active Living Action Plan, the Department will create a coherent policy and sustainable cooperative action for improving health and well-being. These initiatives cover a wide range of approaches, but are consistent in working toward shaping health-directed policies, improving community conditions, coordinating and promoting community-based healthy eating, physical activity, and other healthy living opportunities, creating healthier food systems, creating supportive environments for seniors, and building partnerships to work for healthier environments.

Government has committed in **The Way Forward** to implement an individualized funding model as well as client focused interventions to support individuals who face complex systemic barriers. In addition, Budget 2017, as well as the Minister's Mandate Letter, committed to developing an inclusion-based Disabilities Act. These commitments, along with the actions outlined by the **Inclusion Framework and Action Plan**, help to remove barriers to ensure equitable access to opportunities and services.

GOAL:

By March 31, 2020, CSSD will have led and supported the development and implementation of effective policies and practices that create environments which foster the health, well-being and inclusion of all people.

Indicators:

- Promoted and supported opportunities to make healthy living choices
- Supported healthy active living environments including school and community-based health promotion and physical activity initiatives
- Measured progress against desired outcomes in healthy active living
- Removed barriers to opportunities and services, persons with disabilities and seniors
- Initiated an individualized funding model
- Inclusion-based legislation developed

Objective 1:

By March 31, 2018, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development will have begun implementing policies and actions to promote and support healthier and inclusive communities.

Indicators:

- Developed a Healthy Active Living Action Plan
- Implemented and/or monitored policies and practices to support healthy active living
- Promoted awareness of healthy living initiatives
- Implemented select recommendations of the Age Friendly Transportation Project review
- Initiated development of an individualized support funding model
- Initiated development of an inclusion-based Disabilities Act

- Engaged community stakeholders on client-focused interventions to support individuals with complex needs

Objective 2:

By March 31, 2019, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development will have continued to implement and advance policies and actions that support the health, well-being and inclusion of all people.

Objective 3:

By March 31, 2020, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development will have further supported and assessed policies and actions that support the health and well-being of all people and advance the status of persons with disabilities.

Annex A: Strategic Directions

Strategic Direction # 1: Improved life outcomes for children, youth and families receiving protection and in-care services.

Outcome: Children, youth and families receiving protection and in-care services have improved safety and well-being.

Focus will be in the following areas:

- Permanency planning for children and youth in-care
- Indigenous children and youth in-care
- Kinship care service
- Performance of protection and in-care services
- Health and educational outcomes for children and youth receiving protection and in-care services
- Partner with the Community Sector to Improve Services and Find efficiencies

Strategic Direction #2: Improved health and well-being outcomes for individuals, families, groups and communities.

Outcome: Individuals families, groups and communities experience measureable improvement in health and well-being.

Focus will be in the following areas:

- Awareness and engagement of individuals to take action for healthy, active lives
- Creation of communities that support healthy living
- Health and well-being of infants and young children

- Adults who do not understand or appreciate that they are at risk of abuse and neglect are protected.
- Access to One-Window, Multi-Year Community Grants

Strategic Direction #3: Improved and equitable access to economic, cultural and social opportunities for people who experience barriers to inclusion.

Outcome: People at all stages of life and of variable abilities can participate economically, socially and culturally in a strong and viable province.

Focus will be in the following areas:

- Inclusion and improved access to services for persons with disabilities and seniors by expanding housing and transportation service
- Build a positive image of aging and persons with disabilities and
- Individualized funding model
- Poverty reduction and social development
- Client focused interventions to support individuals with complex needs
- Health in All Policies
- Inclusion-based Disabilities Act

Annex B: Active Entities

The following entities also report to the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development and undertake their own planning and performance reporting in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**:

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC). The NLHC is a crown corporation whose mandate is to develop and administer housing assistance policy and programs for the benefit of low to moderate income households throughout the province. NLHC is governed by a Board of Directors representing different geographic regions and special interest groups and reports to the provincial government through the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development who is also the Minister responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. The Chairperson of the NLHC Board also serves in a dual capacity as Chief Executive Officer and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of NLHC. The Corporation is a Category One entity.

Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Centre. Opened in St. John's in 2008-09, the NL Sports Centre serves as a venue for athlete training, and as host to provincial, national and international competitions for the more than 70,000 athletes, coaches and administrators that make up Sport Newfoundland and Labrador (SNL). All members and the Chairperson are appointed by the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development. The NL Sports Centre is a Category Three entity.

Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

The Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities advises the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities on issues of importance to persons with disabilities and the removal of systemic barriers. This Council is made up of 12 to 18 people who have disability-related

experiences and knowledge. They are women and men of different ages who come from small and large communities. All members and the Chairperson are appointed by the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development, as the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities. The Council is a Category Three entity.

Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors. The Provincial Advisory Council for Aging and Seniors advises government in preparing for an aging population by ensuring that a seniors' perspective is reflected in policy development and in planning for future service delivery. The mandate of this Council is to advise and inform government on issues, concerns and needs of seniors. The Council provides a mechanism for seniors to have a strong voice in the development of comprehensive programming to support the independence and well-being of an aging population. The Council consists of 12 members in addition to a Chairperson. All members and the Chairperson are appointed by the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development. Members serve up to a three-year term. The Council is a Category Three entity.