

Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities
September 8-9, 2016, St. John's, NL
Meeting Notes

Attendees

Paul Walsh, Elizabeth Chaulk, Delia Connell, Don Connelly, Dennis Gill, Justin Mercer, Patricia Moores, Nancy Reid, Paula Corcoran-Jacobs, Bruce Oldford, Donna Piercey

Regrets

Lorna Gilbert, Phil Lundrigan, Mackenzie Mitchell, Katarina Roxon

Opening Comments

Paul Walsh, Chair, welcomed members to the 23rd meeting of the Council. The Chair acknowledged the former Deputy Minister's work. The opportunity to meet the new Deputy Minister was welcomed. He also noted that Council representatives attended Medical Assistance in Dying consultations and a teleconference to prepare for September's meeting.

Tabled correspondence:

Incoming

- Response from Health and Community Services Minister on access to counselling services to Deaf community
- Response from Child, Youth and Family Services Minister on mental health supports to parents
- Information on new appointment process to agencies, boards and commissions.

Outgoing:

- Response to individual advocate on the Hunters and Anglers with Disabilities program
- Letter to Environment and Conservation Minister on equitable access for hunters and anglers with disabilities
- Follow up letter to Milton Peach, Chair of Board of Trustees, Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (Eastern Region) on ensuring accessibility is a priority consideration in school closures

The Learning

DPO News Presentation

Information provided: inclusion grant program, action plan update, accessible taxi program update, universal design, changes in government departments and changes to Disability Policy Office team.

Dialogue with Minister Responsible

Council was updated on status of appointment process for Council and Government's structural changes to a new department of Children, Seniors and Social Development. Council was also updated on the status of the Action Plan. Council raised issues on:

- Potential impacts of new government structure on the Disability Policy Office;
- Status of supported decision-making commitment;
- Supports for individuals with disabilities who have aging caregivers;
- Transitional planning in community to support individuals with disabilities.

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The Work

Dialogue with Advanced Education, Skills & Labour (AESL)

Council discussed the impact of accessing programs and services with Dennis Hogan, Assistant Deputy Minister. Council shared positive examples and provided advice on:

- Adjusting earnings exemptions;
- Expanding supported employment to all regions of the province;
- Access to disability-related supports for post-secondary education.

Dialogue with Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD)

Council discussed inclusive education with Janet Vivian-Walsh, Deputy Minister and staff members Bernie Ottenheimer, Director of Student Support Services and Jackie Fewer-Bennett, Inclusive Education Consultant. Council provided positive stories on when inclusive education works and provided advice on:

- How inclusive education works when transition planning and guidelines are completed and the policies are connected with the operations so all levels of education (from policy makers to school board to school staff and teachers) are on the same page;
- Making access to assistive technology for students with disabilities flexible, timely, and available lifelong;
- Making accessibility of schools a priority consideration, especially for school closure decisions and new schools.

Dialogue with Health and Community Services (HCS)

Council discussed equitable access to programs and services with John Abbott, Deputy Minister of Health and Community Services. Council shared positive examples and provided advice on:

- Shifting from the medical model to the social model in the department's policies, programs and services;
- Equitable access to supports, programs and services for individuals who have mental health disabilities;
- Access to mental health supports and services for persons who are deaf including access to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and psychologists and counselling professionals who are fluent in ASL.

Actions

Council will:

1. Provide summary reports to AESL, EECD, and HCS of the discussions.
2. Provide advice to the Minister Responsible on disability-related issues highlighted during the meeting.
3. Invite Health and Community Services Deputy Minister to discuss the recent Home Support Review Report.

Next Meeting

Next meeting dates are tentatively set for early December in St. John's.