

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
INFORMATION NOTE**

**DATE:** April 26, 2021  
**CLIFF#:** 259789

**DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE (if applicable):** March 2, 2021  
**PREVIOUS CLIFF # (if applicable):** 258495

**PREPARED FOR:** Allison Bond, Deputy Minister

**ISSUE:** Establishing wellness supports for Minister's Advisory Council on CYSN

**BACKGROUND:**

The Minister's Advisory Council (MAC) on CYSN convenes on May 5 and 6, 2021. Members include Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals with lived experience of the CYSN system of supports, service providers and government representatives.

To promote an emotionally safe, trauma-informed environment for members to work together, DM Allison Bond approved provision of counselling supports for MAC members (Cliff # 258495). Options for procuring a clinical counsellor for the May 5 and 6 meetings are limited due to time constraints and procurement rules.

The Ministry currently has a contract with Morneau Shepell to provide critical incident and trauma counselling to ministry employees. Morneau Shepell has indicated that they are able to have a counsellor available to attend the MAC meetings on May 5 and 6 and provide individual counselling to members after the meeting should it be required.

**DISCUSSION:**

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Procurement of wellness supports beyond the first May meetings will include choices for the members including on-site counselling available during the meetings as well as options for council members to have access to their own chosen counsellor at any given time using the Ministry voucher system. Council members will also be given information on counselling supports, including province-wide and regional supports: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/mental-health-support-in-bc>.

It is difficult to anticipate the wellness supports needed given the diversity of experiences each member brings with them. It is proposed to include in the agenda during the first meeting, where appropriate, the opportunity to discuss the availability, access and wellness supports members would hope to have during their time on council and what their level of safety and comfort is in having on-site supports. The council members' input to how the wellness supports are offered also demonstrates the Ministry's authentic interest in meeting the needs

of the members. If the council members agree on the types of wellness support, then the process of procuring services can be better defined following the May meeting and established for future meetings.

Should council members want the opportunity to use their own counselling services (some may have existing counsellors, and a list of qualified counsellors will be made available), the Ministry will issue a letter of authorization to each council member who then shares this with the counsellor to seek reimbursement directly from the Ministry.

The letter/voucher includes some control(s), such as;

- The dates within which services can be provided (start/end).
- The maximum number of clinician hours that will be provided.
- The maximum dollar amount that can be paid for each visit and/or for the full duration.
- A unique number for each letter/voucher issued.
- The letter does *not* need to include the member's name.
- The person signing these letters/vouchers should have appropriate Expense Authority for the expense.

The letter/voucher will direct that payment will be reimbursement based and can be submitted for reimbursement by either the MAC member or by the clinician. In addition to a copy of the clinician's invoice, the letter/voucher number must be used for billing and reimbursement purposes.

The voucher provides confidentiality and removes any anxiety for council members as the Ministry works with the retained counsellor to manage reimbursements and administration. This would enable MAC members to seek their own supports confidentially, and is in keeping with culturally safe, trauma-informed practice.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

- Morneau Shepell is contacting the Public Service Agency and MCFD account holders to confirm the ministry's current contract may be modified to extend coverage to MAC members for May 5 and 6.
- Confirm letter/voucher to facilitate independent counselling supports.
- Refine approach to wellness supports for future CYSN MAC meetings including determining whether to proceed with procurement to retain clinical counsellor supports and/or confirming voucher system for wellness supports.

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**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
INFORMATION NOTE**

**DATE:** April 26, 2021  
**CLIFF#:** 259742

**DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE:** February 5, 2021  
**PREVIOUS CLIFF #:** 244783

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development

**ISSUE:** Prevention and Family Supports – Update on Contracted Service Provider Engagement

**BACKGROUND:**

Strategic Initiatives Branch is developing the Prevention and Family Support Service Framework to provide direction for the implementation of significant systemic changes which support the ministry's direction towards enhancing prevention and early intervention. Engagement with children, youth, families, and community partners is critical to supporting this commitment to transformational change.

Strategic Initiatives Branch received approval in November 2019 to engage with contracted service providers (CSPs) to better understand the experiences of families with lived experience within the child welfare system. The onset of the pandemic required this work to be paused. This series of engagements is now planned to begin in mid-May of this year.

**DISCUSSION:**

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**NEXT STEPS:**

- Invitations to participate in the virtual focus groups will be sent to selected CSPs before the end of April.
- Following the completion of this series of engagements, the data collected will be analysed and used to inform the ongoing development of the Prevention and Family Supports Service Framework.

**ATTACHMENTS:** N/A

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**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
INFORMATION NOTE**

**DATE:** April 15, 2021  
**CLIFF#:** 259564

**DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE:** January 20, 2021  
**PREVIOUS CLIFF #:** 257338

**PREPARED FOR:** Minister Mitzi Dean

**ISSUE:** Preparing for inaugural Minister's Advisory Council on CYSN

**BACKGROUND:**

The Minister's Advisory Council on Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN MAC) has completed the recruitment of members and is preparing for its inaugural meeting early next month. The Minister's Advisory Council provides a forum to:

- Build collaborative and respectful relationships through ongoing communications and engagement
- Discuss important issues related to planning and the delivery of the full range of CYSN services, and
- Support the ministry's work to improve the system for children and youth with support needs in B.C., while ensuring that families are at the centre of those changes.

The council aims to represent all families, children and youth who receive services, and includes people with a diverse background of needs and abilities. The council consists of 16 members, including parents/caregivers of children and youth receiving CYSN services. Members include diverse ethnicities and areas of the province, along with an Indigenous Elder, a youth representative and representatives from a variety of CYSN umbrella organizations, with no more than two members representing the same diagnosis.

The inaugural meeting is scheduled for May 5, 2021 (1-4pm) and May 6, 2021 (1-4pm). Planning for this meeting is underway.

**DISCUSSION:**

A variety of actions have been completed to successfully launch the inaugural meeting of the CYSN MAC:

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Further discussion is required to further advance planning for the inaugural session.

**NEXT STEPS:**

s.12; s.13

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Draft orientation package message
- Draft Agenda
- Applicant Bios

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**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
INFORMATION NOTE**

**DATE:** April 20, 2021  
**CLIFF#:** 259297

**DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE (if applicable):** N/A  
**PREVIOUS CLIFF # (if applicable):** N/A

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development.

**ISSUE:** Pre-brief materials for a joint meeting regarding a request from the Greater Victoria Acting Together (GVAT) to meet and discuss the issue of youth aging out care and the prevention of youth homelessness in Greater Victoria. Key Ministers included:

- Honourable David Eby, Minister of Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing (MAG),
- Honourable Nicholas Simons, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) and,
- Honourable Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions (MMHA).

**BACKGROUND:**

GVAT is an alliance of 33 organizations that represents more than 100,000 people in Greater Victoria. Members include unions, post-secondary student societies, conservation groups, religious organizations and frontline service organizations.

The alliance has recently formed action research teams that review issues and government responses related to 1) affordable housing and homelessness; and 2) access to mental health and substance use care.

In February 2020, the report, *From Marginalized to Magnified: Youth Homelessness Solutions from Those with Lived Expertise* by the late Katherine McParland was released. The report called for the provincial government to develop a distinct plan to end youth homelessness and to involve youth with lived experience in the process (by January 2021).

In response to this report, GVAT wrote a letter to the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH), SDPR, Children and Family Development (MCFD), MMHA, with a copy to the Minister of Finance, in July 2020. The letter called on government to develop and implement a plan to end youth homelessness, to reform the foster care system as quickly as possible and for ministers to prioritize the prevention of youth homelessness.

The GVAT alliance received a reply from the then Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Kaye Krishna, stating 'through the Office of Homelessness Coordination, a cross-ministry initiative to proactively respond to and prevent homelessness [was underway]' and the 'provincial government was working in partnership with Kathrine McParland to address the issues raised in the report *From Marginalized to Magnified, Youth Homelessness Solutions from Those with Lived Expertise*'. The July 2020 letter and response from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing are attached to the current GVAT letter.

As there are new Ministers in the ministries indicated above, and housing is now part of MAG, the current GVAT letter also asks for an update on the progress to implement the plan on

ending youth homelessness. GVAT is requesting an in-person ministry consultation with their action research team leads currently working on the issue of youth transitioning to adulthood and homelessness. In addition, the letter speaks to the various recommendations from the recent Representative for Children and Youth Report, *A Parent's Duty*, and Basic Income Panel report, *Covering all the Basics: Reforms for a More Just Society*.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Youth transitions remains a government priority. The Minister mandate letters from MCFD, MAG, SDPR, MMHA, Municipal Affairs (MA), and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) all have housing-related commitments.

MCFD in particular plays a key role in homelessness prevention including early, consistent transition planning that is inclusive of appropriate, safe and sustainable housing, and ensuring services and supports are culturally safe and trauma-informed for those transitioning to adulthood.

MCFD continues to work closely with partner ministries to address youth homelessness in an integrated and collaborative way. This occurs both through work to address homelessness directly and to meet the housing needs of youth to prevent homelessness.

### **Homelessness:**

- MCFD is supporting the work of the Office of Homelessness Co-ordination in MAG, which will be developing a Homelessness Strategy.

### **Housing:**

- As part of the MCFD's emergency measures that were put in place in March 2020, the ministry is offering Temporary Housing Agreements (THA) and Temporary Support Agreements (TSA) to support youth in care who are transitioning to adulthood during the COVID-19 pandemic, which allows them to stay where they are past their 19th birthday (until March 2022). Young adults who are ready to transition are being supported to do so.
- The ministry is undertaking an evaluation of the emergency measures to inform future planning and supports available to youth aging into adulthood.
- Early results show that the highest uptake of all emergency measures was for THAs and TSAs, in particular by Indigenous young men.
- In partnership with BC Housing and MAG, MCFD will develop a youth housing strategy for youth transitioning to adulthood as a key component of a Youth Transitions Service Framework.
- The ministry also recently partnered with BC Housing to promote an opportunity for young adults transitioning to adulthood to access the Canada - BC Housing Benefit (CBCHB) to help them pay their rent each month. Young adults enrolled in the Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) program, or who are eligible for AYA, applied for this housing benefit in March 2021. Over 300 young adults benefited from this support.

### **Financial Support:**

- The ministry's key supports for young adults are Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) and the Agreements with Young Adults program (AYA).

- STADD delivers navigational and transition planning support for young adults aged 16-24 with support needs who are eligible for Community Living BC.
- AYA provides young adults ages 19-26 with up to \$1,250 per month (via a needs-based assessment) to cover daily living costs while attending a post-secondary education, vocational, rehabilitation or life-skills program for a maximum of 48 months.

### **COVID-19 Emergency Measures**

Emergency measures were put in place for young adults participating in the Agreements with Young Adults program (AYA), including:

- Making regulatory amendments to the AYA program to support young adults on AYA who turned 27 during the pandemic, as well as those who experienced program pauses or interruptions to continue to receive support while not drawing down on their 48-month limit (available March - September 2020); and
- Adding flexibility to the AYA's life skills and rehabilitative and mental health program options to support low-barrier access for eligible young adults.

Emergency measures that make the AYA Program more flexible were extended until September 30, 2021. These include:

- Young adults can take life-skills programs online.
- Young adults can take life-skills programs for fewer hours per week (5 hours/week instead of 12).
- Life-skills providers no longer need to be approved by the ministry.
- Young adults can do cultural learning as a life-skill program, like learning a family language or meeting with elders.

Additional flexibility was added to the AYA program in October 2020. As a result, young adults:

- Have more options for mental health support while on the AYA program, including access to cultural healing and wellness.
- May attend mental health services for fewer hours per week (10 hours/week instead of 15).
- May take part in more than one program at a time — for example, attending mental health services while going to school part-time — to best meet the needs of each person.
- Have flexibility when they renew their AYA agreement to best meet their needs. They have the option to renew at the end of the school year or at the end of a program, with approval from a social worker, rather than having to meet every six months.

In February 2021, the ministry clarified that young adults could access the AYA program and THA at the same time, providing them with flexibility to participate in programs while remaining in their current living arrangements.

### **Basic Income Panel Report Recommendations**

- Government is currently considering the recommendations presented in the Basic Income Panel report, *Covering All the Basics: Reforms for a More Just Society*. Decisions surrounding

basic income will have shared implications for MCFD and SDPR, if youth transitioning to adulthood are identified as a priority cohort for this funding support.

#### **SUMMARY:**

- Youth transitioning to adulthood experience many challenges, including loss of support at age 19, which increases their risk of homelessness. For example, youth with child welfare lived experience are 193 times more likely to be homeless.
- The ministry's key supports for young adults are Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) and the Agreements with Young Adults program (AYA), and through COVID-19 emergency measures – the THA and TSA – which allow young adults to stay in place until March 31, 2022. The low-barrier COVID-19 AYA emergency measures are available until September 2021 and continue to be monitored as part of an ongoing evaluation.
- MCFD is partnering with BC Housing and MAG to develop a youth housing strategy for youth transitioning to adulthood. MCFD is also supporting the development of a homelessness strategy that is led by The Office of Homelessness Co-ordination in MAG.
- The ministry recognizes more work needs to be done to support youth and young adults transitioning to adulthood. As such, the ministry will continue to work with cross-government partners and community to both prevent and address the issue of youth homelessness on multiple fronts.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Greater Victoria Acting Together Letter on Prevention of Youth Homelessness in Greater Victoria.

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**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
INFORMATION NOTE**

**DATE:** April 12, 2021

**DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE (if applicable):**

February 25, 2021

**CLIFF#:** 259206

**PREVIOUS CLIFF # (if applicable):** 258350

**Estimate Note 2021:** 999402

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development

**ISSUE:** Update on the review of intercountry adoption services and the adoption agency regulatory framework.

**BACKGROUND:**

Since 2001, five BC adoption agencies have ceased operating.<sup>s.12</sup>  
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The ministry agreed to conduct a review, and the scope of this review has broadened to encompass examining not only the licensed adoption agency model, but how intercountry adoption services are provided as well.

Staff are collaborating with the Ministry of Citizens' Services (CITZ) to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an external review of intercountry adoption services and the adoption agency regulatory framework.

CITZ has provided an estimated timeline, including a tentative RFP posting timeframe of mid-May 2021, and contract award by mid-July 2021 (Appendix A).

**DISCUSSION:**

The RFP sets out the following deliverables (Appendix B outlines the scope and anticipated tasks associated with each deliverable):

- coordination, facilitation, and provision of support for engagements on:
  - the delivery of intercountry adoption services in British Columbia (BC), and
  - BC's regulatory framework, processes and tools for the licensing and oversight of adoption agencies;
- evaluation of BC's intercountry adoption service delivery model and preparation of a report, building on the engagement findings to answer questions outlined in Appendix B;

- gap analysis and evaluation of BC's adoption agency regulatory framework, building on the engagement findings to answer the questions outlined in Appendix B.

The RFP will provide for an 18-month contract term, with an option to extend for two additional six-month periods for a total term of up to two and a half years. Such extensions would be considered only if the contractor demonstrates, to the Province's satisfaction, that there is an unavoidable barrier to completing the deliverables within 18 months. The budget for the review is \$350,000.

Government Communications and Public Engagement is developing a Minister's announcement to be made before the RFP is posted. Staff will notify the following partners prior to the announcement, based on the proposed communications plan in Appendix C:

- Government of Canada;
- Office of the Ombudsperson;
- BC Representative for Children and Youth;
- Delegated Aboriginal Agencies;
- First Nations Leadership Council;
- Métis Nation BC;
- Métis Commission;
- senior Ministry staff involved in the delivery of intercountry adoption services;
- the two licensed adoption agencies in BC; and,
- the Adoptive Families Association of British Columbia.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

In May, Minister Dean is expected to announce Government's intention to have an external review conducted on intercountry adoption services and the adoption agency regulatory framework. Partners will be notified shortly before the announcement is made, as proposed in Appendix C (the draft communication plan has not been vetted by GCPE yet).

The RFP for the external review will be posted to the Province's procurement site, BC Bid, shortly after Minister Dean's announcement. An 18-month contract of up to \$350,000 is expected to be in place by mid-July.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Tentative Request for Proposals Timeline
- B. Proposed Scope of the External Review
- C. Proposed Communications Plan

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## Appendix A - Tentative Request for Proposals Timeline

The following is an overview of the tentative timeline and milestones leading up to the Request for Proposals (RFP) being posted and the contract being awarded, based on advice from the Ministry of Citizens' Services. The milestones and associated tasks are standard steps taken in RFP development across government.

Milestone and Associated Tasks	Expected Completion Timeframe
RFP and contract template drafted	April 12
Review of draft RFP, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• risk assessment,</li><li>• legal reviews,</li><li>• creation of a proposal evaluation workbook, and</li><li>• internal Ministry review/approval (Assistant Deputy Minister)</li></ul>	April 26
External approval of RFP, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public Service Agency approval</li><li>• legal approval</li><li>• financial approval</li><li>• contract management approval</li></ul>	May 14
Posting of the RFP to BC Bid for four weeks	May 17 (posting to close approximately June 14)
Proposal evaluation period	June 14 – July 9
Contract Awarded	July 12

## Appendix B – Proposed Scope of the External Review

The external review is proposed to include three broad deliverables, each with associated tasks as follows.

Deliverable	Purpose	Associated Tasks
Coordination, facilitation, and provision of secretarial support for engagements on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the delivery of intercountry adoption services in British Columbia (BC), and</li><li>BC's regulatory framework, processes and tools for the licensing and oversight of adoption agencies.</li></ul>	To gather information on the existing opportunities and challenges within the adoption agency/intercountry adoption sector.	<p>Facilitate, and summarize findings from, engagements with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the two licensed adoption agencies in BC,</li><li>a representative sample of Ministry staff involved in the delivery of intercountry adoption services,</li><li>staff in similar positions in the two Delegated Aboriginal Agencies that provide adoption services,</li><li>a representative sample of BC families who have adopted children via intercountry adoption, and</li><li>the Adoptive Families Association of BC.</li></ul> <p>Upon the Provincial Director of Adoption's advice and based on the focused scope of the review, it is not recommended that this deliverable involve the contractor undertaking broad engagement of Indigenous governments and peoples. That is proposed to occur during the policy and legislation development resulting from the external review.</p>

## Appendix B – Proposed Scope of the External Review

Deliverable	Purpose	Associated Tasks
<p>Evaluation of BC's intercountry adoption service delivery model and preparation of a internal report with recommendations.</p>	<p>To address the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the full range of challenges facing BC's intercountry adoption service delivery model for families, agencies, and the Ministry?</li> <li>• What, if any, is the degree of alignment between the intercountry adoption service delivery model and the Ministry's strategic direction respecting permanency for BC children and youth?</li> <li>• Does the intercountry adoption service delivery model enable the Ministry to meet all of its obligations under the Hague Convention and if not, what are the gaps preventing the obligations from being met?</li> <li>• What are the options and recommendation respecting government's role in the delivery of intercountry adoption services?</li> <li>• What are the options and recommendation for modifying or replacing the current intercountry service delivery model?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the Hague Convention and related legislation and policies, to understand the obligations placed on the Ministry, agencies, and families.</li> <li>• Review of the intercountry adoption process for children coming from countries that are not Hague signatories.</li> <li>• Cross-jurisdictional review to understand the various intercountry adoption service delivery models within Canada.</li> <li>• Literature review to identify the benefits and challenges of other options for intercountry adoption service delivery.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B – Proposed Scope of the External Review

Deliverable	Purpose	Associated Tasks
Gap analysis and evaluation of BC's adoption agency regulatory framework.	<p>To answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the current licensing and regulatory framework support the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ effective and efficient agency regulation in the public interest, and</li><li>○ the Provincial Director of Adoption and agencies to meet their obligations under the <i>Adoption Act</i> and its regulations?</li></ul></li><li>• What are the gaps and the options and recommendations for addressing them?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comprehensive review of the Adoption Agency Regulation and the relevant <i>Adoption Act</i> provisions.</li><li>• Cross-ministry review of current licensing and oversight processes, tools, and requirements in other provincially regulated sectors within BC.</li><li>• Cross-jurisdictional review of adoption agency licensing and oversight processes, tools, and requirements within Canada and the United States.</li></ul>

## Appendix C - Proposed Communications Plan

Activity	Responsibility	Proposed Timing
<p>Email to the following internal partners*:</p> <p><u>Ministry:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Deputy Directors of Adoption</li> <li>Directors of Operations with responsibility for adoption services</li> </ul> <p><u>Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DAA Partnership Table, via the DAA Secretariat</li> </ul>	Provincial Director of Adoption	One day before the Minister's announcement
<p>Email to the following external partners*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government of Canada</li> <li>Office of the Ombudsperson</li> <li>BC Representative for Children and Youth</li> <li>Licensed Adoption Agencies</li> <li>Adoptive Families Association of BC</li> </ul> <p>Email to the following Indigenous organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Nations Leadership Council</li> <li>Métis Nation BC</li> <li>Métis Commission</li> </ul>	Provincial Director of Adoption	<p>Email to be sent the morning of the Minister's announcement</p> <p>Follow-up telephone call to be held with the licensed adoption agencies, coinciding with the Minister's announcement</p>
Minister's announcement	Government Communications and Public Engagement	TBD
Request for Proposals posted to BC Bid	Ministry of Citizens' Services (Child Welfare and Reconciliation Policy is the MCFD lead)	TBD – tentatively May 17

\*It is recommended that the email to internal and external partners be sent shortly before the Minister's announcement, to prevent an inadvertent pre-empting of the announcement.

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**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
INFORMATION NOTE**

**DATE:** February 17, 2021

**CLIFF#:** 256925

**PREPARED FOR:** The Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development

**ISSUE:** Engagement on proposed amendments to Provincial Court (*Child, Family and Community Service Act*) Rules.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Ministry of Attorney General (MAG) has accountability for all Provincial Court rules under the *Court Rules Act*, including the Provincial Court (*Child, Family and Community Service Act*) Rules.

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**DISCUSSION:**

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**NEXT STEPS:**

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**ATTACHMENTS:**

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