

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

DATE: December 2, 2020
CLIFF#: 255891

DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE: October 16, 2018
PREVIOUS CLIFF # 240051
PREVIOUS CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED: Compensation
re: collective agreement ratification

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

DATE, TIME AND LOCATION OF MEETING: January 19, 2021

ISSUE: Background on relationship of Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU)

BACKGROUND:

On April 1, 2019 the 18th Main Public Service Agreement was ratified between Government of the Province of BC and BCGEU and effective until March 31, 2022. Part of this Agreement is that each ministry form at least one joint committee (Article 29) composed of representatives from the Employer and the Union that shall meet at least every 60 days. The role of this committee is to review and discuss workplace issues following a consultative and collaborative leadership approach.

A recommendation in the Representative for Children and Youth report entitled, "Lost in the Shadows" (February 6, 2014), identified the need for MCFD to give focused attention to staffing, workload and safety challenges, and called for collaboration with the BCGEU on these issues. In answering this recommendation, the Ministry and BCGEU agreed to establish a Joint Working Group (JWG) which commenced meeting in May 2014. An additional BCGEU/MCFD JWG Occupational Health and Safety Sub-Committee (OSC) was established in September 2014 to focus on workplace safety. Both of these committees continue to meet approximately three times per year in addition to the Article 29 meetings.

On October 2018 BCGEU President, Stephanie Smith met with Minister Katrine Conroy to discuss compensation issues brought forward to them from their members.

On March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic MCFD, BC Public Service Agency (BCPSA) and BCGEU convened a committee to discuss staff health and safety and review current measures in place to protect employees and members to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19. The parties acknowledged the need to continue to provide services to children, youth and families was imperative and that by meeting weekly on COVID-19 emerging issues they could be resolved in a timely manner to ensure the safe delivery of services.

DISCUSSION:

MCFD is committed to a collaborative and consultative working relationship with BCGEU with regular meetings for discussing key employee issues. This is evidenced by having two additional

committees to address MCFD specific issues focused attention to staffing, workload and safety challenges and another COVID-19 committee to address pandemic issues.

In the meeting with Minister Conroy, BCGEU discussed compensation issues stemming from the 18th Main Public Service Agreement related to youth custody employees, non-child protection workers and the potential inequity in non-union contracted community social service sector sites who may not receive equivalent pay increases. Matters related to collective bargaining remain the jurisdiction of the BCPSA, who negotiate contracts on behalf of the BC Government and concerns raised by the BCGEU in this area should be referred to the BCPSA.

MCFD has recognized the importance to the COVID-19 pandemic and have worked together to discuss emerging health and safety issues regarding youth custody centres, personal protective equipment, office safety plans, cleaning etc. Both parties agreed that basing workplace controls on the direction provided by the Provincial Health Officer and BC Center for Disease Control are crucial to the health and safety of our employees and members.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE:

MCFD is committed to continue working with BCGEU to address employee concerns and is committed to a collaborative and consultative working relationship with the common goal of creating a healthy and safe workplace while continuing to serve our children, youth and families.

Contact

Assistant Deputy Minister:

Teresa Dobmeier

Assistant Deputy Minister

778 698-0429

Alternate Contact

for content:

[Name]

[Division/Branch/Region]

[Phone number]

Prepared by:

Charito Elderfield

Strategic HR

778 698-9381

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

DATE: January 4, 2021
CLIFF#: 256326

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

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

ISSUE: Overview of Indigenous Engagement on Child Welfare Jurisdiction and Authority

BACKGROUND:

In May 2016, at the BC First Nations Child and Family Gathering, the Province of British Columbia, federal government and First Nations leaders came together to discuss the current state of child welfare. At that Gathering, the Province of BC acknowledged that the child welfare system was not meeting the needs of Indigenous children and youth.

At the end of the gathering, the Province of BC committed to working with the federal government and First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) in three key areas:

- Immediately improve child welfare services by ensuring that Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) staff connect with First Nations, identify First Nations children in care, and work to improve services and supports to keep more First Nations children out of care,
- Work with Canada and the FNLC to build new jurisdictional and funding frameworks that would support improved outcomes as well as empower First Nations who are interested to exercise their own jurisdiction over child welfare; and
- Establish a tripartite working group to guide the work of the Province, Canada and the FNLC.

The Tripartite First Nations Children and Families Working Group (TWG) was formed and consists of representation from MCFD, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR), Indigenous Services Canada, and First Nations Leadership Council (First Nations Summit, BC Assembly of First Nations, Union of BC Indian Chiefs). The TWG has a confirmed Terms of Reference, developed a Reconciliation Charter, and has a yearly work plan to address systemic issues including jurisdiction and funding as it pertains to child welfare in First Nations.

Given the unique landscape of First Nations interests in BC, MCFD also committed to engaging directly with First Nations who were interested in exploratory discussions regarding child welfare jurisdiction at the community level. s.16

s.16

DISCUSSION:

s.13

s.13

With the federal government taking a more active role at the individual community tables in 2018, this opened the door to constructive conversations regarding the question of the legal mechanism under which First Nations would resume jurisdiction over child welfare.

Since 2019, several legal shifts occurred which have had a direct impact in this area. In the spring of 2019, the amendments to the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA) came into force offering more opportunities for involvement and collaboration with the director to enhance a community's decision-making and authority for their children and families. Federal legislation, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families (the Act)* came into force on January 1, 2020, bringing a wholesale change to the landscape for Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services. With the passing of BC's *Declaration Act*, another potential pathway has been created for a community to explore to help realize their goals as they pertain to children and families.

There now exists a number of "pathways" for Indigenous communities to become more involved and/or assert their authority or jurisdiction over child welfare matters. These pathways vary from agreements under the CFCSA to a coordination agreement under *the Act*, to treaty or reconciliation agreements. These pathways are not linear and there is no requirement for an Indigenous community to pass through one stage or another, but provides clarity on the options that are now available to community. Please see appendix A "Pathways" document for reference.

Taken together, these changes have meant that much work with communities over the past year has been focussed on information sharing and exploring the implications of these significant changes. These changes have also necessitated extensive engagement with different teams across MCFD, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Attorney General and with federal colleagues, to support policy development, information exchange and technical briefings, which continue to occur.

SUMMARY:

MCFD continues to engage with a variety of individual First Nations, Nations and Treaty tables as they come forward to support them in their interests of exercising greater authority and/or jurisdiction as it pertains to child welfare.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A – Pathways document

Appendix B – Descriptions of Engagements January 2021

Contact

Assistant Deputy Minister:

Denise Devenny

*Partnership and Indigenous
Engagement Division
778-698-4956*

Alternate Contact for content:

*Tiffany Hamilton
Director, Indigenous
Engagement Branch*

*Partnership and Indigenous
Engagement Division
778-698-7698*

Prepared by:

Denise Devenny

*Partnership and Indigenous
Engagement Division
778-698-4956*

OPTIONS FOR AUTHORITY & DECISION-MAKING FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES					JURISDICTION	
	Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)	Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA)	Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA) Agreements	UNDRIP Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act	An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, Youth and Families	Self-Governing
LEGISLATION	CFCSA	CFCSA	CFCSA	Declaration Act– Cabinet mandate required CFCSA	Indigenous Community Law	First Nation Law through Treaty, Reconciliation Agreement, Self-Governing Agreement, etc.
DECISION MAKER	Director	Director	Director (Exception: Referral Agreement)	Joint: Indigenous Governing Body and Director	Indigenous Governing Body	Treaty First Nation
ACCOUNTABILITY TO	Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director FN communities who signed BCRs to receive service from DAA Board of Directors 	Director and Indigenous Community (Exception: Referral Agreement)	Indigenous Community and Director	Indigenous Community	Treaty First Nation

Page 04 of 10 to/à Page 10 of 10

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.16

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

DATE: December, 2020

CLIFF#: 255789

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

ISSUE: Development of provincial youth housing partnership between MCFD and BC Housing

BACKGROUND:

Strategic Initiatives (SI) has initiated discussions with BC Housing (BCH) about the development of a provincial housing strategy for youth which will include youth who age out of government care as a priority cohort. This is one aspect of the cross government work that SI is responsible for in order to support youth transitions with other partners, such as Social Development and Poverty Reduction and Advanced Education and Skills Training. The current work with BCH is advancing due to their significant motivation and associated emerging opportunities.

BCH has a particular interest in youth aging out of government care following the *COVID-19 & Youth Homelessness Special Report #2* by the BC Coalition to End Homelessness. The report identified that young adults on Temporary Housing Agreements are at risk of homelessness when the Agreements end on March 31, 2021. MCFD and DAA social workers work to plan and support transitions to ensure young adults (for this cohort) have stable and secure housing, wherever possible. BCH is delivering 100,000 units of housing across BC over the next ten years and have committed to include youth who age out of government care as a priority group.

DISCUSSION:

BCH is working with The BC Coalition to End Youth Homelessness to develop the youth housing strategy, with early input and engagement from SI. Other areas of MCFD will need to be engaged as this work progresses. To best understand the current landscape, SI has canvassed the 13 Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) to identify what local partnerships exist between SDA's and individual BCH regions. Moreover, there are a number of activities underway that have the potential to be used as province-wide approaches in the future.

SI has worked with the Modelling, Analysis and Information Management Branch to organize and analyze data on youth aging out by SDA over the next two years in order to fully capture the provincial distribution of need and housing pressures that exist (see Appendix A). GBA+ analysis will be applied to this data and inform the nature of the housing need for these cohorts. This will clarify early areas of focus and how current initiatives may be scaled up. With the key potential to influence the locations of where BCH establishes new housing units. Notably, there is a particular focus on the cohort of young adults that have aged out of care during the current pandemic and remain on a Temporary Housing Agreement (THA) that expires on March 31, 2020.

While the strategy is in its early stages of development, BCH has units soon available that could be allocated to this new BCH priority cohort. One such opportunity is a new housing development program in Chilliwack called 'Switchback', operated by the Cyrus

Centre. Switchback is aimed at high risk youth and young adults aged 16 to 24 who have complex situations (substance use, street entrenchment, early school leaving, for example). It provides wrap around services such as two awake staff 24/7, individualized life skills programming and partnerships with community and government. BCH and the Cyrus Centre have offered four individual units (fully furnished and equipped suites) to MCFD in the 22 bed program. The EDS for Fraser East where the program is located, has been informed of the opportunity, is supportive, and has identified that an existing MOU with BCH for AYA housing units could be expanded to be inclusive of the additional units. While these units will only benefit one SDA, there are additional units soon available across BC to support other SDA's as the work continues. Delay of the strategy to be fully developed before bringing units online will mean missed opportunities to house youth and young adults from government care.

To support funding, the costs associated with housing placements at programs such as Switchback, the AYA program (as well as Youth Agreements and Independent Living Agreements) can be allocated via a portion of the payment to cover housing expenses. AYA payments are up to \$1250 per month and are calculated using a needs-based assessment and a cost estimate guide. Any costs exceeding the cost estimate maximum require higher levels of approval. The ministry's cost estimate guide for this basic shelter is currently set at \$500-950 per month. This could support the cost of the rent associated with the housing program/placement, which is typically set by BC Housing at a rate of approximately \$400 per month. In addition, there is potential for BCH to request that MCFD contributes to these housing placements through support funding. Thus far, no requests have come out of partnership development discussions.

NEXT STEPS:

SI continues to lead work with BC Housing to develop the youth housing strategy. Along with the progression of the strategy, an evaluation plan will be developed for Executive approval and implementation. A project initiation document (PID) will be presented to MCFD's Portfolio Board for review and approval. Any additional BC Housing units that become available for youth leaving care will be considered in alignment with the aging out of care data, the conclusion of Housing Agreements on March 31, 2021, and existing BCH-MCFD partnerships that are in place and in parallel to the development of the youth housing strategy.

ATTACHMENTS (if applicable):

Appendix A: Projection of youth in care aging out by placement type and SDA.

Appendix B: COVID-19 & Youth Homelessness Special Report #2 by the BC Coalition to End Homelessness.

Contact**Assistant Deputy Minister:**

Carolyn Kamper
Strategic Integration, Policy
& Legislation, MCFD
Phone number: 778-698-
8835

Alternate Contact**for content:**

Catherine Talbott, Ex Director
Strategic Initiatives Branch,
Strategic Integration, Policy
& Legislation Division, MCFD
Phone number: 778-698-
8821

Prepared by:

Joanne Baker, Director
Strategic Initiatives Branch,
Strategic Integration, Policy
& Legislation, MCFD
Phone number: 778-621-
2420

Appendix A

Projection of Youth In Care Aging Out by Placement Type and SDA

Table 1: Projected Age-out From In Care by Placement Types

	Nov2020- Mar2021	Apr2021-Mar2022	Apr2022- Mar2023
Total Age Out	170	565	482
Aging Out from In Care	170	535	482
Contracted Resources	47	165	147
Foster Care	73	232	241
Others	17	73	62
Independent Living	33	47	10
Not Coded		19	23
Transition Out of the Extended Housing Supports		30	

Table 2: Total Estimated Age-outs by SDA

	Nov2020- Mar2021	Apr2021-Mar2022	Apr2022- Mar2023
Province	120	427	388
Coast/North Shore	4	23	23
East Fraser	20	48	39
Kootenays	5	9	9
North Central	6	24	35
North Fraser	14	49	38
North Vancouver Island	13	36	39
Northeast	0	11	9
Northwest	1	12	11
Okanagan	7	25	18
South Fraser	17	55	45
South Vancouver Island	11	37	39
Thompson Cariboo Shuswap	6	47	27
Vancouver/Richmond	16	52	57

Explanatory notes:

- The blue highlighted lines in Table 1 are the categories where it is considered that housing will be required upon aging out.
- Table 2 provides a detailed breakdown of the residential categories by MCFD's Service Delivery Areas (SDA's).

- Projections are based on the current youth in care and their expected age out dates. The projections are complemented by an estimate of new admissions of older teenagers based on historical trends. The counts include youth in care from Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs).
- The numbers include the young adults who aged out during the pandemic and who are on the extended housing supports which have been provided as COVID-19 emergency measures. Most of these young adults are already living on their own through programs such as Youth Agreements or Independent Living Agreements (Temporary Supports Agreements). Therefore, only those living in a foster or CRA placement that has been extended through a Temporary Housing Agreement are included.



COVID-19 & YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

SPECIAL REPORT #2

July, 2020



Submitted by:
**BC COALITION TO END YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS**

Page 07 of 30 to/à Page 30 of 30

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

Copyright

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

DATE: January 11, 2021

DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE (if applicable): November 3, 2020

CLIFF#: 256563

PREVIOUS CLIFF # (if applicable): 255100

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

ISSUE: Decision on Employer Health Tax (EHT) Transition Funding Application for ARCUS Community Services.

BACKGROUND:

The government transitioned from Medical Service Plan (MSP) to the Employer Health Tax (EHT) by reducing MSP by 50% for years 2018 and 2019 and elimination in 2020. EHT became payable for the year 2019 which created a cross over between the two payments for that year.

s.12

Arcus Community Resources Ltd (Arcus), is a for profit, multi-funded agency, receiving funding from provincial government contracts through MCFD, Community Living BC, and the Health Authorities. Their primary target population is children, youth and adults with physical disabilities and complex medical conditions.

s.12

DISCUSSION:

MCFD conducted an application process to distribute funding to eligible agencies where agencies were required to submit by January 31, 2020. It was clearly communicated that applications received after this date will not be considered.

MCFD reviewed the applications received and committed to distribute the funding to eligible agencies by March 31, 2020. Funding was issued as a grant.

In order to meet the March 31st deadline for grant payment, MCFD had to finalize all grant payment information by March 16th.

MCFD received a total of 97 applications in time for payment of which 60 were approved, resulting in an expenditure of \$1.115M.

Late applications were approved and processed after the deadline but prior to fiscal end. Late applications received after the fiscal were not approved.

s.14

SUMMARY:

Funding for service provider EHT transition costs was available for FY 19/20 only and was distributed via a grant application process.

s.14

ATTACHMENTS:

A. Response to ARCUS

Contact

Assistant Deputy Minister:

Rob Byers

*Finance and Corporate
Services*

778-698-3813

Alternate Contact

for content:

Nadine Criddle

*Procurement and Contract
Management Branch*

250-356-1328

Prepared by:

Abigail Pittman

*Procurement and Contract
Management Branch*

250-952-1968

Page 3 of 3

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.14

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

DATE: December 31, 2020
CLIFF#: 256647

DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE: N/A
PREVIOUS CLIFF #:
PREVIOUS CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED: MO request:
Invitation to SFU Panel Event January 8 at 11-12:00pm

PREPARED FOR: Allison Bond, Deputy Minister

DATE, TIME AND LOCATION OF MEETING: January 8th, 2021 from 11am – 12pm, (virtual)

ISSUE(S): Panel event “Addressing the Impact of the Pandemic on Families of Children with Special Needs” hosted by SFU’s Autism & Development Disorders Lab (ADDL)

BACKGROUND:

Simon Fraser University’s (SFU) Autism and Development Disorders Lab (ADDL) in the Department of Psychology conducts research on Autism Spectrum Disorders, Down Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, and other Developmental Disabilities. The Director of the ADDL is Dr. Grace Iarocci, a psychology professor at SFU. She is also the past president of the Board of Directors of Autism Community Training (ACT), a Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Scholar and a faculty mentor of the Autism Research Training Program (ART) that recruits and trains outstanding researchers of autism in a variety of disciplines.

SFU’s ADDL is organizing a virtual event “Addressing the Impact of the Pandemic on Families of Children with Special Needs” to be held on January 8th, 2021 that will host a panel discussion to hear parental concerns addressed, and the Minister has been invited to participate as a panel member. Confirmed panelists include: Tracy Humphreys, Chair of BCEdAccess; Karla Verschoor, Executive Director of Inclusion BC; and, Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth, Representative for Children and Youth (RCY).

DISCUSSION:

In Spring 2020, researchers from SFU’s Autism and Development Disorders Lab (ADDL) and the Social Attention Group in Education (SAGE) collaborated with ACT – Autism Community Training and created an online survey for caregivers of children with Autism. Their goal was to find out how families are coping with the extra pressures caused by COVID-19, (with a focus on mental health, family and child functioning, and quality of life), and to assess satisfaction with MCFD’s and the Ministry of Education’s supports and services throughout COVID-19. Appendix A has an infographic poster depicting the preliminary findings of the survey that was recently presented at a Kids Brain Health Network conference, as well as being covered by various news outlets including The Globe and Mail, the National Post and News 1130.

The preliminary findings found that out of the 238 caregivers who completed the survey:

- 37% of caregivers were worried that their child would physically hurt another family member (primarily attributed to the increased level of anxiety triggering aggression in their child with Autism)
- 9% of caregivers considered putting their child into care due to the lack of supports;

- 40% of caregivers reported that COVID-19 has either moderately or severely impacted their family income;
- While 3 families reported positive impacts of the pandemic on their child, the majority of caregivers reported their family relationships, well-being, anxiety, and sleep quality have worsened during the pandemic; and,
- It was also noted that “open-ended responses indicate the need for mental health supports, respite, and greater flexibility with funding”.

Event information shared by ACT states “Many BC families have been severely shaken by the impact of COVID-19. Research undertaken by Simon Fraser University, the Representative of Children and Youth, ACT, Family Support Institute and Inclusion BC have all highlighted the lack of engagement on the part of the Ministry for Children and Family Development in supporting children with special needs.” Dr. Iarocci noted in her invitation to the minister that she is “hoping [the Minister] will be available and willing to be part of the panel and share [the ministry’s] mandate, response and commitments to families with children/youth with special needs, during the pandemic”. The preliminary findings of this study suggest overall that the supports and services provided to families by the ministry have been insufficient and/or inappropriate to meet their needs, as approximately half of the survey respondents found the ministry’s relief supports to be “not helpful at all” or “not that helpful”.

The report “Left Out: Children and youth with special needs in the pandemic” released in December 2020 by the RCY echoed many of the same concerns that were noted with these preliminary findings by the ADDL. Their report also notes a lack of flexibility in terms of both how funds can be used, and in rolling over unused funds to the following year, financial and housing insecurity for families of children with special needs that has worsened with the pandemic, as well as poor communication from MCFD. Similarly, to the ADDL survey, the RCY report found that many families surveyed were unaware of the supports and services that were available to them, including the temporary relief measures that MCFD implemented.

The ministry’s response to the pandemic and the various temporary relief measures and policy changes that were implemented to provide additional support to families of children and youth with special needs have undergone scrutiny by both advocates and families. It’s suspected that any existing gaps in supports and services have likely been exacerbated for many families as a result of the pandemic; this is an area the ministry has already been exploring with the development of the CYSN Service Framework underway.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE:

s.13

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. "The Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health, Quality of Life, and Service and Support Needs in Families of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Preliminary Findings" infographic poster
- B. Temporary Covid-19 Response Measures for Autism Programs

Contact

Assistant Deputy Minister:

Carolyn Kamper
Strategic Integration, Policy
and Legislation
778-698-8835

Alternate Contact

for content:

Danielle Smith
Early Years and Inclusion
778-698-7368

Prepared by:

Jan White
Early Years and Inclusion
778-679-9646

The Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health, Quality of Life, and Service and Support Needs in Families of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Preliminary Findings

Vanessa Fong¹, Elina Birmingham¹, Deborah Pugh², & Grace Iarocci¹

¹Simon Fraser University

²ACT – Autism Community Training

SFU

Copyright

ATTACHMENT B: TEMPORARY COVID-19 RESPONSE MEASURES FOR AUTISM PROGRAMS

- The need for physical distancing has meant that many families have been unable to access the face-to-face services they depend on during the COVID-19 pandemic and many services were initially inaccessible, before service providers were able to adapt their practices. With this in mind, we have acted to help families who need some extra support by:
 - expanding the services families could purchase with their autism funding and the amount of funding that could be allocated to purchasing equipment.
 - We have also allowed families of children in all age categories to use autism funding for counselling and therapy services through virtual care.
 - This expansion and flexibility in autism funding remained in effect through August 31, 2020.
- MCFD has also modified policy so that families/caregivers of children or youth whose 6th or 19th birthday falls between March 15 – August 31, 2020 had up to three additional months to use unspent funding from the affected funding period.
 - Families/caregivers were encouraged to work with Autism Funding Program staff, who would assist them to ensure access to the unspent funding that supports their child or youth's intervention plan.
- Eligible families were also able to access our short-term Emergency Relief Support. This fund provided a direct payment of \$225 per month for up to three months to assist eligible families to purchase supports that help alleviate stress.
 - Originally available through June 30, 2020, this fund was also made available from July 1 – September 30, 2020.
 - Emergency Relief Support could be used to purchase supports that assist in alleviating some caregiving demands and support family functioning.

GENERAL AUTISM FUNDING INFORMATION:

- The autism funding agreements in place for families are automatically renewed at the end of the child's birth month. Families have access to the full allotment of autism funding until their child turns 19 (\$22,000/year for children under the age of 6, and \$6,000/year for children and youth ages 6-18).
 - When an approved service provider submits an invoice to the Autism Funding Branch, the Ministry pays the invoice directly from the program's budget and then counts that portion towards the individual's annual allotment.
 - The Ministry plans for these expenditures each year, ensuring the annual allotment of autism funding is available to eligible children.

Page 1 of 6 to/à Page 6 of 6

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.12 ; s.16

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

DATE: January 5, 2021

CLIFF#: 256691

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

ISSUE: Basic Income (BI) Panel Report Recommendations – MCFD implications.

BACKGROUND:

Youth transitioning out of care is a priority for government and is a renewed focus in the MCFD and SDPR mandate letter commitments, particularly as it relates to poverty reduction and building upon transition supports to reach all youth aging out of government care.

On July 3, 2018, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) announced the creation of an expert committee (the panel) to explore the feasibility of BI in British Columbia. The work was expected to outline areas that could be explored through a pilot project.

The panel concluded that a pilot project would not generate the benefits that a long-term approach could achieve, nor is a government funded universal BI program financially feasible. Rather, the report acknowledged the enhanced vulnerabilities of certain groups (individuals with disabilities, youth in/from government care, gender-based violence) and called for specific reforms to better meet their unique needs. See Appendix A for an excerpt of report's recommendations that relate to youth aging out of care.

65 recommendations were put forward, 11 of which were targeted to youth and young adults. The key recommendations did not identify a lead ministry however, obvious MCFD implications include:

- Increase MCFD resources.
- Enhance transition planning and community support capacity.
- Extend the Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) program education and training duration.
- Enhance the AYA program life-skills support.
- Create targeted BI for former youth in care.
- Initiate BI with community support engagement.

Other cross-government recommendations that apply or may apply to young adults:

- Mandate a ministry to support former youth in care.
- Extend Assisted to Work program eligibility to former youth in care.
- Establish a B.C. Learning Bond.
- Contribute to B.C. Learning Bond for children in care.
- Create a B.C. Career Trek program.
- Combine Income Assistance support and shelter allowances.
- Expand targeted supportive housing.

- Institute a B.C. Rent Assist refundable tax credit.

The proposed approach is to implement new policies incrementally, evaluate them, and consult with key partner groups before making subsequent adjustments. SDPR is taking a discussion of the panel's report and proposing to Planning and Priorities Committee in January – date to be confirmed (see Appendix B for presentation).

DISCUSSION:

Staff engaged with the panel over the summer and fall of 2020, and provided feedback/advice regarding youth transition issues, including providing key source documents from engagement, research and jurisdictional scans that are informing government work.

The panel supports the priority to improve outcomes for youth aging out of care. Providing universal financial support to vulnerable youth is a priority for the Ministry, Representative of Children and Youth, and key partners and stakeholders.

MCFD does not have a mandate to support youth once they turn 19, other than through the AYA and Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) programs. Many of the panel's recommendations require a mandate to support post majority youth, legislation and policy change, significant new funding and require further consideration on how they would be operationalized.

For instance,

- If the BI rates are increased as recommended to align with the Market Basket Measure (MBI), AYA rates would also need to increase to avoid disincentive to participate in programming (Market Basket measure (MBM) poverty threshold for a single person living alone is \$20,000 – AYA yearly rates are approximately \$15,000, assuming a young adult accesses year-round programming and they receive the maximum monthly needs-based funding of \$1,250.
- Eligibility for AYA would need to be expanded more broadly than envisioned in Budget 2020 direction to include all young adults with 24 months of cumulative time in care (without the 12-19 age parameter, as set out in the Budget 2020 commitment).
- The panel's recommendations pertaining to life-skills development needs to be considered in context of community capacity development, as MCFD currently does not fund life-skills providers.
- Considering if another ministry administers the AYA program.

The recommendations within the BI report require significant investment, consultation with former youth and care and key stakeholders, change management, and an overhaul of existing legislation, policies and practices.

Many MCFD advocates see BI as a tool that can be applied to several important social issues, like poverty, that will have collateral benefits, such as improving health and community development.

NEXT STEPS:

Continue to work closely with SDPR to advance government's direction on the panel's recommendations.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A – Pages from Final Report BC Expert Panel on Basic Income.

Appendix B – SDPR's presentation to P&P.

Contact**Assistant Deputy Minister:**

*Carolyn Kamper
Strategic Integration, Policy
and Legislation Division
250-208-9482*

Alternate Contact**for content:**

*Catherine Talbott
Strategic Initiatives Branch
250-896-9180*

Prepared by:

*Julie Czeck
Strategic Initiatives Branch
250-920-8067*

8. Reforms targeting young adults

We will split this discussion into a component examining policies for youth aging out of the government's care and a component focusing on other young adults from low-income backgrounds.¹²⁰ Youth transitioning out of care face a set of distinct issues that call for setting up specific supports for them, but other young adults from low-income backgrounds need help with education, and that is the focus of our recommendations for that group.

There are several programs for young adults currently in place; these were described and analyzed in Part 4, Section 5.7 (Youth Aging Out of Care). They include the Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) program; the tuition waiver program, which waives mandatory fees, including tuition, at all B.C. public post-secondary institutions for eligible youth in care and youth aging out of care; and the Youth Education Assistance Fund, which provides grant funding to eligible former children in care who are attending post-secondary education on a full-time basis.

Improving youth transitions involves many organizations, including multiple ministries, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, and other agencies. Resources and mandates are siloed, and it is difficult for youth and young adults to know how to navigate government resources.

8.1 Youth aging out of care

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is responsible for, among other things, supporting children and their families where the safety and well-being of children may be at risk. The stated goal of the ministry is to support families to reduce the vulnerability of these children wherever possible, keeping children safe within their family home environment. If a child or youth cannot stay safely with their family, they are placed in an out-of-care arrangement (e.g., with extended family). If an out-of-care arrangement is not possible, then a child will be “taken into care”—that is, legal guardianship for the child is taken over by the Director of Child Welfare and the child is placed with a foster family, contracted residential agency, or another arrangement. Both out-of-care and in-care arrangements can continue until the youth's 19th birthday, at which point they “age out” of the system.

One alternative to being taken into care for vulnerable youth aged 16–18 is Youth Agreements. These are agreements that may be entered into with youth who “experience a significant adverse condition such as homelessness, behavioural or mental disorders, severe substance abuse or sexual exploitation *and* they cannot live with their family *and* government care is not the best option” (Turpel-Lafond, 2014). These agreements are for youth with “out-of-care” status, and they specify financial and caseworker supports and a plan for moving toward independence. The initial plan is for three months

¹²⁰ Youth are defined as being under 19 years of age and young adults are defined as being 19 years and over.

and is then renewable for six-month spells but, like foster care, ends at the youth's 19th birthday. The corresponding agreement for youth in care is called an Independent Living Agreement and includes the same components as a Youth Agreement. For simplicity, we refer to both as Youth Agreements.

Approximately 1,000 young people age out of the system each year, including from in-care and out-of-care status. It is important to note that Indigenous children are vastly over-represented. Of the 7,210 children and youth in care in B.C. in 2015, 61% were Indigenous, while only 8% of children under age 18 in the overall provincial population are Indigenous (Shaffer et al., 2016).

There is no government agency with a specific mandate to support youth aging out of the system or who have been under the system's jurisdiction for significant parts of their childhood. Many youth who are in the system at their 19th birthday have no financial support or family connection. To get support, many of these youth have to turn to the Income Assistance system as young adults. As noted by the former Representative for Children and Youth, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, though, the needs of young people aging out of care are "profoundly different from those of the general population of unemployed adults" (Turpel-Lafond, 2014, p. 29).

The AYA program provided by MCFD supports education, rehabilitation, and life-skills development programs for former youth in care,¹²¹ but there is not a general mandate from government for the ministry to support this group, and the program is not fully funded. Agreements under the AYA program provide maximum financial benefits of up to \$1,250 a month for periods of up to six months at a time and 48 months in aggregate for the period up to the recipient's 27th birthday. Changes made in 2018 extended the program's original maximum duration and the maximum age of access, as well as increasing the maximum monthly benefit.

In addition to access to supplemental benefits to pay for extra living costs, such as a baby crib or extra costs for medications, AYA funding can be used to cover monthly living costs, such as rent, transportation, and tuition that is not covered by the tuition waiver program. Several post-secondary institutions, including the University of British Columbia, initially took up Turpel-Lafond's 2014 challenge and made tuition free for former children in care. The initiative has now been extended to all post-secondary institutions in B.C.

There are only a few social workers dedicated to the AYA program for the whole province. Some guardianship social workers and youth workers also participate in administering the program in addition to their caseload of children and youth under 19 years. Seven out of 24 Delegated Aboriginal Agencies also administer AYAs. The AYA program has a component which funds recipients to participate in life-skills programs but there is no direct funding for life-skills service providers. Changes have been made to

¹²¹ Cultural programs are also now included under the AYA life-skills program policy to help Indigenous young adults connect with their culture and traditions.

life-skills programs in response to the pandemic, working to make the AYA program more accessible through low-barrier life-skills programs that also included a component of cultural education for Indigenous participants. COVID-19 emergency measures also included temporary changes to the rehabilitation stream to allow young adults to access AYA funding through a broader range of mental health supports and services.

Take-up rates of AYA are low—only 12% of eligible young adults in 2015 rising to 16% in 2019. Currently 35% of youth who age out of care go on an AYA within 12 months, but this still leaves nearly two-thirds who do not access this program. Moreover, of those who take up the program, 34% are Indigenous and 66% are non-Indigenous—almost exactly the reverse of the composition of the former youth in care population as a whole (Shaffer et al., 2016). AYA support for post-secondary education is particularly unbalanced relative to the eligible population, with the program being heavily and disproportionately taken up by non-Indigenous females, although that has shifted somewhat under the COVID-19 emergency measures.

It is certainly good that such a program is being offered and used, but the numbers point to a large disconnect between the program and the majority of former youth in care. Many require social supports in order to get to the point where they can reasonably consider post-secondary education, life-skills programs only partially provide these supports, and many people require more wraparound support to prepare themselves.

In addition, failure to succeed in any of the education or program streams under AYA results in loss of support as a breach of their agreement under AYA, and no support is provided to help them try again or try something else. Adequacy could be improved by providing stable, ongoing support in terms of cash transfers and basic services sufficient to meet basic needs for a reasonable period to enable people to transition into independent adulthood.

Recommendations

The outcomes described in Part 4, Section 5.7 (Youth Aging Out of Care), make it clear that it would be valuable to provide considerable additional resources for young adults who have had previous experience with the child welfare system. Most importantly, this is a matter of justice, and there is room to improve the current program framework in that respect, as established in Part 4.

For these youth to meet our hoped-for goals of self-efficacy and a feeling of social inclusion, they will need support that gains their trust. For them to truly have the same opportunities as youth who did not experience their tumultuous childhoods, the government needs to provide the same kinds of supports that any parent would give to their young adult children. Secondly, given the rates of Income Assistance use and low educational completion rates among these youth, there is surely an argument for later cost savings from investing in them when they are young.

To understand how to address these problems, it is instructive to turn to the voices of the youth themselves and those of people who work with them. The following are some of the quotes gathered from MCFD engagement data received by the Strategic Initiatives Branch between 2018 and 2019:

“We have nobody to help us with anything if we don't have a support worker to help us. We didn't have parents helping us before and we still don't after we turn 19. Funding to help with schooling, activities like going to the gym or a movie, driving lessons - any of that would of course be beyond awesome, but we also really need someone to help us along the way because I have nobody to turn to. I have been lucky to have my support worker but not everyone has one. I couldn't have made any of this progress without my support worker and get to go to college now, but no funding for it because I did not turn 19 in care, but I was in care for 5 years. I wish I could get AYA, that would be so appreciated and helpful, so I hope they change their eligibility criteria. I really hope Bridges doesn't go away because I'll be hooped without my support worker.” (Young person)

“Should be more attention paid to mental health, depression and funding issues—AYA should not be just a cheque.” (Young person)

“Program [Agreement with Young Adults] needs to be about more than finance benefit, needs to be a relational program that helps the young person transition to independence.” (Delegated Aboriginal Agency staff member)

“Young people ‘aging out’ require support with life skills, not just financial support.” (Delegated Aboriginal Agency staff member)

And from Doucet et al. (2017)—a collaborative video project with a group of co-researchers who were former youth in care:

“All co-researchers expressed frustration with the cut-off of supports at the age of majority. They emphasized that the lack of guidance and support received during their time in care in preparation for their transition to adulthood negatively affected their lives after ‘aging out’ of the system. Many felt a sense of loss and isolation after leaving care, as they had no continued support system despite still being at risk of experiencing significant difficulties.” (p. 53)

“All co-researchers expressed that the child welfare system’s sole focus on independent living prevents youth ‘aging out’ of care to form lasting and healthy relationships, and forces them into isolation and to grow up too fast. While learning life skills such as budgeting, cooking, and cleaning were deemed important to a young person’s

functioning, being connected to others who can provide continuous mentoring, support and nurturing throughout adulthood was considered equally as important.” (p. 56)

These quotes present a common theme: young people aging out of care are certainly lacking resources, but what they need to make any financial resources useful is true personal support and attachment. To us, this is clearly a situation where offering a basic income alone would fall far short of what is needed. What these youth appear to be looking for is not simply independence—financial or otherwise—but the combination of the opportunity to try out their independence with a feeling they have a true base of support that other youth enjoy.

Shaffer et al. (2016) discuss the concept of “connected autonomy” and state that while the system emphasizes independence, “a consistent theme emerging from a broad range of studies: youth aging out of care, while striving to live independently, require social supports and community connections that facilitate relationship-building and improved mental wellbeing, among other important benefits” (vol. 3, p. 20).

Based on this, the Vancouver Foundation’s Fostering Change Initiative argue that “young people leaving foster care should be confident they have at least three things to count on until age 25.

1. Consistent financial support with basic living costs like housing, transit, and food while they attend school, learn skills, and find work.
2. Long-term relationships with caring dependable adults for support, advice, and references, so that they always have somewhere to turn.
3. A chance to connect and contribute to their communities through creative, cultural, and volunteer activities, so that they feel like they belong.” (Shaffer et al., 2016, vol. 3, p. 21).

This way of looking at what is required fits closely with the joint goals of autonomy, efficacy, and social connection underlying our justice-based objective, set out in Part 2, and we agree with Shaffer et al.’s assessment. We recommend reforms in four main areas. Given the very substantial over-representation of Indigenous children, families, and youth in these systems, any change should be done in the context of partnerships with Indigenous communities both on and off reserve. We note that new federal legislation, *An Act Respecting First Nations, Métis and Inuit Children and Youth*, includes national principles and standards, along with providing communities jurisdiction over child and family services. This legislation will change the system for Indigenous children and youth.

MCFD resources

Truly addressing the issues for youth aging out of care requires continuous improvement of the system supporting them before age 19. The existing system seems to be under-resourced to the point where the balance between addressing emergency child protection issues and providing proactive family and child support services is skewed to the former. We are not expert in these systems, and this area is beyond the scope of our mandate, so we don't provide specific recommendations for change.

Nevertheless, some themes seem obvious. Children (and their families) would benefit from consistent support from one support worker over time, allowing real connections to be made and providing the child with at least one reliable personal connection whatever other tumult they face, if permitted by the resources available. Doing that almost certainly requires substantially increasing the number of staff to the point where their caseloads are small enough that they are able to spend more time with the children in their charge.

Recommendation 31 (short term): Increase Ministry of Children and Family Development funding related to child protection and family services, increasing social worker resources with the objective of establishing longer-term continuity of contact between families, vulnerable children and children in care, and ministry social workers.

Community support and engagement

As Shaffer et al. (2016) point out, there is an existing network of community organizations helping youth aging out of care. The government should determine which organizations are being the most effective and provide them with the resources to provide a reliable network of options for these youth. It is important that efficacy should not be measured just in terms of independence-related outcomes, such as education completion, employment, and earnings, but in terms of whether the organizations provide a secure community as a basis for youth to make autonomous decisions (and sometimes fail in those decisions).

There are strong advantages to working with community organizations rather than trying to create a government agency. In particular, the youth can take part in determining the direction of these organizations, enhancing their sense of self-efficacy and giving them a voice in the balance of autonomy and support that is right for them. The organizations also tend to have staff who have lived experience, which makes them a natural source for mentoring. This is important because one key emphasis for the programs should be establishing a stable relationship between the youth and a mentor/caseworker. This is being done successfully elsewhere; for example, Big Brothers and Sisters of Canada has a working relationship with the Ontario government to establish long-term support relationships for youth aging out of care in that province (Rennie, 2016). Although there are community organizations in B.C. that are

funded to support former youth in care, they are not funded to support them in transitioning to self-reliance, including transition planning.

Recommendation 32 (short term): Provide core capacity funding for the most effective community organizations helping former youth in care—those that provide a secure environment and base of support from which the youth can make autonomous decisions related to outcomes such as education and employment—to create capacity for transition planning and support.

Educational and life-skills support

The AYA program includes support for those engaged in post-secondary education and training, which was extended in 2018 to allow for up to 48 months of support in aggregate under Agreements with Young Adults. Many university students take more than four years to complete their undergraduate education, while others may choose to combine both academic and trades training, or to change their educational direction as they search for their best path forward. We also know that former youth in care tend to need more time than others to achieve their educational goals and that it is important to give them the flexibility to fail.

Recommendation 33 (short term): Extend the number of allowed months for education and rehabilitation under Agreements with Young Adults beyond 48 months.

The life-skills support component of the AYA program should be expanded. Given the low high school graduation rate for youth in care at age 19 and the trauma they have experienced, a post-secondary academic or trades-training option, or possibly even completing high school, are not immediately accessible goals for many of them. Changes to the non-post-secondary education component of AYA need to be made in consultation with youth, the organizations mentioned under Recommendation 32 and, in particular, Indigenous communities. AYA services have very low take-up rates, suggesting that their current form is not attracting many of the youth who need help, which further suggests that enhancing the range of assistance provided would be helpful.

Recommendation 34 (short term): Expand and enhance the life-skills support component of the Agreements with Young Adults program in consultation with affected young adults and organizations that support them.

Our recommended Assisted to Work program (Recommendation 27) will have the ability to provide intensive, customized supports to overcome barriers to work for populations that experience the greatest difficulties in achieving long-term labour force attachment. In addition to people with disabilities and women escaping domestic violence, we believe that youth aging out of care would also benefit from access to this program.

Recommendation 35 (medium term): Make former youth in care eligible for the Assisted to Work program (Recommendation 27), established to provide intensive work supports to overcome significant barriers to accessing good jobs. Design eligibility details in consultation with affected young adults and organizations that support them.

Financial supports

We believe that more readily accessible financial support for youth aging out of care would be beneficial. This set of people is defined by events not under their control that occurred before age 19. Thus, the government can afford to be generous with financial support without concern that such support will draw others into the system. Indeed, drawing more of these youth into support is clearly a goal. About 1,000 youth age out of care each year in B.C., and the vast majority of them do not access the available supports. In addition, 74% of former youth in care receive Income Assistance benefits at some point by age 34. Those who are in the AYA program are currently receiving up to \$1,250 a month in support, so expenditures on transfers targeting these youth will partly replace existing expenditures.

At the same time, encouraging moves toward autonomy is important, and financial supports should be set up to encourage that. Shaffer et al. (2016) recommend a system with gradual reductions in guaranteed payments until age 25, and this makes sense to us. In the current system, access to AYA is restricted to those who were in government care or in a Youth Agreement on their 19th birthday. This cuts out youth who might have been in care earlier in their childhood but happened not to be in care at age 19. We believe extending eligibility to these youth will increase the number of youth eligible by about 10% over the number currently eligible for an AYA.

Recommendation 36 (short term): Implement a new targeted basic income benefit for all youth formerly in care, with the following features:

- benefit at least equal to the Market Basket Measure poverty line
- 0% benefit reduction rate
- full amount paid for ages 19–21, reduced by 25% per year and phased out at age 25
- reduction suspended up to two years for education and training
- eligibility for youth in care or in Youth Agreements at 19 or in care for at least two years at a younger age
- entering into a young adult agreement not required for eligibility
- Agreements with Young Adults program adjusted accordingly and accessible to at least age 27, ensuring that current program participants receive at least as much financial support
- **must be combined with community supports (Recommendation 37)**

We cannot stress enough that a guaranteed income without youth-driven community supports is not enough to make a difference. Indeed, it would have the potential to drive youth away from community resources that come with the attachment and social connection they need. Moreover, the youth support workers quoted above expressed concern that some of the youth may not be ready for the responsibility of an income without supports.

The following two recommendations are intended to ensure that participants have at least a minimum reciprocal requirement to engage with these supports enough to understand what is available, and to ensure that the delivery of financial aid and other supports are delivered in an integrated fashion. This may be seen by some as paternalistic, but it is much less so than the requirements now imposed by agreements under the AYA program. Also, while allowing individuals the autonomy to choose what and how much support to utilize, it reflects the importance that they understand the availability of supports for them and that they have every opportunity to access them.

Recommendation 37 (short term): Design the financial support program for youth aging out of care so that financial payments and the offered support services would be initiated through a youth contacting one of the service delivery organizations (of the youth's choice) and would involve an initiation session to give the youth information on available supports.

Quite apart from the recommendation to deliver transition support and planning through community organizations, the whole program for former youth in care should be organized for delivery in an integrated fashion so as to avoid barriers to access and stigmatization, including the principle of meeting the young adults where they are. Current programs have low take-up levels, likely due in part to lack of trust among former children in care wanting to separate themselves from the system that formerly acted as their guardian. Instead, these former children in care are now adults and should be provided with services in a way similar to those provided to other adults, through a seamlessly integrated approach. It is crucial that reformed supports be designed using a collaborative and consultative process with former children in care and other stakeholders, including youth under age 19, youth-serving organizations, Indigenous communities, MCFD's provincial youth advisory council, and advocacy groups.

Recommendation 38 (short term): Establish a specific legislative mandate and funding allocation for a designated ministry or other government agency to support former children in care. Currently, no single ministry has such a mandate, but it is necessary to ensure that all programs focused on this group are designed and administered in a coordinated, seamlessly integrated fashion. This is particularly important because the list of supports is long, including financial aid, life-skills support, education support, social work assistance, and funding for/operations of community organizations providing support. All of this must be based on ongoing collaboration and consultation with former children in care and other stakeholders.

A key input to public trust is cost. What we propose in Recommendations 32 to 38 in terms of creating a wraparound system to help youth aging out of care through the transition to adulthood would cost on the order of \$120,000 to \$190,000 per young adult. These are significant costs, but it is helpful to put them in the context of costs associated with these vulnerable young adults under the current system. As discussed in Part 4, Section 5.7 (Youth Aging Out of Care), the fiscal costs associated with the extremely poor health, justice, education, and financial outcomes that this group experiences are roughly estimated to be \$320,000 per person in net present value terms at age 19. We don't see this as an estimate of the savings that would result from our recommendations, since we do not know what their effects will be on these various outcomes, but it provides context for the spending we propose.

Perhaps more importantly, 31% of the children of people who were formerly in care are taken into care themselves, compared to 1.5% of the rest of the population, and former children in care have much higher fertility rates than the general population. This implies that any cost estimates have to be projected across generations—a particularly important consideration given evidence of strong associations between childhood poverty and health outcomes through the rest of life (Schmidt et al., 2020). There is a clear need to help the families of people formerly in care to escape this cycle. We believe that if this alone were known, there would be considerable public support for sizable expenditures in this area.

While we recognize that these recommendations will require significant effort and changes to implement, this is an area that we regard as being of high priority; we have therefore put these recommendations into the “short-term” category.

8.2 Youth from low-income backgrounds, not in care

Substantial gradients by family socio-economic status (defined by parental education and income) persist in Canada in high school completion rates, college and university attendance, and college and university graduation (Foley & Green, 2016). These differences in educational outcomes represent a substantial inequality in opportunities and lifetime income between children from lower-income and higher-income backgrounds.

However, eliminating differences is not entirely straightforward because the differences do not appear to be due only to differences in income. Foley et al. (2014), for example, find that the higher dropout rate for boys from low socio-economic backgrounds is largely eliminated once researchers control for parental attitudes toward education. Transfer programs or even free tuition are unlikely to resolve that issue. Indeed, since higher-income families take greater advantage of educational opportunities, policies such as greater subsidization of post-secondary education or universal free tuition may exacerbate rather than reduce inequality in education and income (Foley & Green, 2016).

What is needed are policies targeting children and youth from low-education backgrounds and that not only make post-secondary education more affordable but also help bridge the socio-economic gap in the attention and value assigned to education (Robson, 2017).

B.C. has several initiatives aimed at helping youth from low-income backgrounds choose to access post-secondary education.

The B.C. Access Grant, effective August 1, 2020, will support 40,000 post-secondary students from low- and medium-income backgrounds.¹²² It is meant to address financial disincentives for low- and middle-income youth to access post-secondary education. The grant amounts to a maximum of \$4,000 per year for educational programs lasting two years or less, and \$1,000 per year for programs lasting four years or longer. It is important that this support be in the form of a grant, since prior research indicates that potential students from low-income backgrounds are less likely to enrol in more education when offered even a low- or no-interest loan than a grant. The 2020/21 mandate letter for the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training states that the minister is expected to “Expand the B.C. Access Grant program by increasing eligibility to reduce barriers and make sure more people are able to access the skills they need for the jobs of the future.”

The B.C. Training and Education Savings Grant is a one-time \$1,200 contribution to a child’s Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) with no matching parental contribution required. It is available to all families regardless of income, though it will be of greater relative value to low-income families. In that sense, it reinforces the incentives in the RESP program, including the Canada Learning Bond (CLB), through which the federal government deposits \$500 in the first year and \$100 in subsequent years in the RESPs of children from low-income households. Importantly, CLB take-up is low. For B.C., only 41% of eligible families take part in CLBs, even though it is essentially free money (Robson, 2017). This fits with Robson’s point that money is only part of increasing educational participation for children from low-income households.

This level of support is well below that in, for example, Ontario, through the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). Through OSAP a post-secondary student from a family with an income of \$30,000 a year without any other issues or conditions is eligible for \$7,000 in grants and \$7,600 in student loans for a year. The online calculator for the system is clear and shows potential students how the grants plus loans will cover their necessary expenses. The B.C. offerings do not come close to doing so.

B.C.’s support is also offered in a way that has built-in barriers. The B.C. Training and Education Savings Grant has a several-step application process that includes getting a Social Insurance Number for both parents and children, providing proof of residence, filling out an application form, and having that form evaluated by Knowledge First Financial. For low-income families who are uncertain about taking the

¹²² See <https://studentaidbc.ca/news/grants-scholarships/new-bc-access-grant>

gamble of sending their child to post-secondary education in the first place, this is hardly a blazing neon sign beckoning them in.

Robson (2017) reviews evidence on policies that have been tried around North America to encourage post-secondary education among children from low-income families and concludes that the most effective policies engage children and their families from the time children are young. In particular, education bonds that the family owns (but that can only be used for the child's education) can be effective if introduced early in the child's life and if the family and child are clearly aware of their ownership of the bonds. RESPs and the CLB have some of this feature but clearly not in a form that encourages take-up for the majority of low-income households.

Recommendation 39 (short term): Implement a \$1,000 B.C. Learning Bond account that is automatically created for children from low-income families at birth or a year after immigration, which can be used only for education.

The bond would be deposited in a notional account and would supplement the CLB so that by age 18, there will be over \$4,000 available to help cover education costs (Robson, 2017). Families should be clearly notified of the bond when it is given, and new notices of the existence and value of the bond should be sent every year. It would be treated as taxable income for the child when used, as for current RESPs.

Recommendation 40 (short term): Automatically create a learning bond when children are first taken into care, if a learning bond is not already in place.

As mentioned earlier, engaging children from low socio-economic circumstances in moving to post-secondary education is about more than just money. Several provinces, including B.C., have programs designed to help children understand the opportunities that are available to them, including mandatory high school courses and initiatives undertaken by community organizations. Manitoba's Career Trek, for example, has programs that specifically help low-income children and youth "discover who they are and what occupation they might want to pursue."¹²³ It emphasizes engaging parents, guardians and extended family in career discussions, since family support is important for success. Robson (2018) reviews the available literature and notes several studies that evaluate these types of interventions and find them effective. These programs tend not to be expensive.

Recommendation 41 (short term): Create a B.C. version of Manitoba's Career Trek to support low-income children in moving to post-secondary education and training by encouraging increased family engagement.

¹²³ See <https://careertrek.ca/about-us/who-does-career-trek-serve/>

Geographic differences also lead to unequal access to education. Rural education completion rates are much lower than urban completion rates, with high school dropout rates in rural areas being about double those in Canadian cities (Uppal, 2017). B.C. has built a web of colleges and universities around the province that, in principle, make it easier for youth from all communities to get a post-secondary education. We believe it would be worthwhile to re-examine that system and its funding to make sure that it is able to deliver on its promise of province-wide access to advanced education, which is also a priority set out in the minister's mandate letter.

Finally, in any tabulation of educational outcomes, Indigenous youth appear as under-represented and lagging behind. Addressing this is the highest priority but requires a process that fully engages the Indigenous communities; we are therefore not in a position to make recommendations on it.

Release of the Report from Expert Panel on Basic Income

Report to Planning and Priorities Committee

Hon. Nicholas Simons
Minister of Social Development & Poverty Reduction

January XX, 2021

Background

- Cabinet approved the Terms of Reference for the Expert Panel on Basic Income in July 2018 to meet a commitment of the 2017 Confidence and Supply Agreement between the BC Green Caucus and the NDP Caucus. The TOR commit to a public release of the Report.
- 2020 Mandate letter:
“Build on our government's Poverty Reduction Plan, TogetherBC, and the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Basic Income to determine the best approach and path forward to reducing poverty long-term...”

Background

- Expert Panel Members:
 - David Green, Chair, UBC
 - Jonathan Rhys Kesselman, SFU
 - Lindsay Tedds, University of Calgary
- Panel commissioned over 40 research projects from researchers across Canada
- Final report consists of 6 volumes and is 466 pages.

Scope

- The panel was tasked with answering three questions:
 1. Should B.C. implement a basic income?
 2. Should B.C. establish a basic income pilot?
 3. Could B.C. implement reforms to the existing income and social support system using basic income principles?

Recommendations

1. Should B.C. implement a basic income?

No.

The panel advises against implementing a basic income in BC at this time, citing both complexity and cost, along with concerns about impacts on supplemental benefits and services currently offered.

Recommendations

2. Should B.C. establish a basic income pilot?

No.

The panel also recommends against a basic income pilot at this time, as there is no benefit to the expenditure or subjecting participants to the potential unintended consequences when a move to a broader basic income is not currently under consideration.

Recommendations

3. Could B.C. implement reforms to the existing income and social support system using basic income principles?

Yes.

The panel makes recommendations on how to modify BC's support system for low-income residents using basic income principles:

- Income and disability assistance reforms, including rate increases of \$300 a month (\$500 for persons with disabilities), a targeted basic income support for persons with disabilities, former youth in care and people fleeing violence.
- Labour reforms to address precarious employment.

Recommendations

3. Could B.C. implement reforms to the existing income and social support system using basic income principles?

- Reforms to housing supports, including creating a tax-based rental assistance program modelled after a similar program in Manitoba that provides rent supports to low-income residents.
- An extended health benefits supplement system for all low-income households and individuals (including dental, optical, mobility devices, therapeutic services); and
- Targetting of refundable tax credits to low income residents through a consolidated ‘dog wood’ benefit similar to the consolidated ‘trillium’ benefit in Ontario

Indigenous Peoples

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

- Article 19 calls for consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures;
- Article 21 requires states to take effective measures that will ensure the continuing improvement of economic and social conditions for Indigenous peoples;
- Article 23 states that Indigenous people have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programs affecting them; and
- Article 38 states that in consultation with Indigenous peoples, states shall take appropriate measures including legislative measures to achieve the ends of the declaration.

Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action do not specifically reference poverty reduction or basic income.

However, consistent themes within the report relate to inadequacies in child welfare, health, educational and social services, which would be captured within the scope of a Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Page 26 of 32 to/à Page 27 of 32

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.12

Page 28 of 32

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.12 ; s.14

Page 29 of 32 to/à Page 32 of 32

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.12

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

DATE: January 14, 2021
CLIFF#: 257120

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: Ministry of Children and Family Development's Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) services and initiatives

BACKGROUND:

Child and Youth Mental Health services provide tier four and five level clinical treatment to more than 25,000 children and youth across 13 provincial service delivery areas. CYMH has over 500 clinical and administrative staff, six Indigenous Child and Youth Mental Health teams and partnerships with contracted providers (Vancouver Coastal Health and Intersect in Prince George). All these providers offer groups and individual treatment in 88 locations. Specialized teams are also available to treat those less prevalent, but more acute disorders such as psychosis and eating disorders. During the pandemic, SDD quickly shifted to provide on-line individual and group treatment and psycho-educational videos to ensure continuation of services for youth.

Since 2019, CYMH has supported the implementation of the Government's roadmap for mental health and substance use *A Pathway to Hope* (PTH).¹ CYMH has inter-ministerial collaborations with Mental Health and Addictions, Health and Education to deliver three PTH Initiatives designed to improve services for children, youth and young adults:

- Integrated Child and Youth Teams (ICYT)
 - Anticipated launch April 2021
- Step up/Step Down Outreach Services (SUSD)
 - High Intensity Outreach model approved
 - Draft of clinical implementation guide completed
 - Hiring of provincial SUSD coordinator in February
 - Clinicians hired in Comox and Maple Ridge
 - On the ground service commencing in April, with access through ICY teams
- Early Intervention Service Enhancements
 - Five contract agencies engaged
 - Expected to have 17 FTE delivery early childhood intervention service

CYMH participates on the Child, Youth, Young Adult (CYYA) and the ADM governance committees which oversee the delivery of these initiatives.

Under a PTH, CYMH also contracts with Canadian Mental Health Association to deliver *Confident Parents: Thriving Kids* and FamilySmart which provides peer-led family and youth support within hospitals, community and eventually within ICY teams in schools. CYMH's School Mental Health is also funded through PTH to deliver universal prevention resources for teachers. This resource, *Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators* is now expanding resources for teachers of grades 8-12. During the pandemic, *EASE At Home* was developed to provide parents with tools to support their children who were experiencing anxiety and worries. In 2021, School Mental Health will expand beyond EASE to deliver a range of prevention and early intervention mental health resources, in keeping with our Government's priority.

A joint Minister briefing with Ministers Dean, Dix, Malcolmson and Whiteside on PTH is scheduled for February 1, 2021. See Attachment A for the PTH presentation forwarded by MMHA for this joint briefing.

¹ The Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (MMHA), in partnership with the ministries of Children and Family Development, Health, Education and Advanced Education, and Indigenous partners, have developed *A Pathway to Hope*

DISCUSSION:

s.13


CONCLUSION:

CYMH is continuing to collaborate with ministries and community partners to support the mental wellness of children, youth and families. *A Pathway to Hope* provides the roadmap for excellence. Those initiatives, combined with CYMH’s focus on continuous quality improvement will help deliver gold standard, accessible mental health treatment to all our children, youth and families, especially the most vulnerable.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: PTH presentation prepared by MMHA for the joint Minister briefing Feb 1

Contact Assistant Deputy Minister: <i>Carolyn Kamper</i> <i>Strategic Integration, Policy</i> <i>& Legislation Division</i> <i>(778) 698-8835</i>	Alternate Contact for content: <i>Barbara Casey</i> <i>CYMH Policy Branch</i> <i>(778) 698-7135</i>	Prepared by: <i>Deborah Pawar/Tracey Hulten</i> <i>CYMH Policy Branch</i> <i>(778) 698-8990</i>
--	---	---



Pathway to Hope Improved Wellness for Children, Youth and Young Adults

Overview and Current Status

Minister of Mental Health and Addictions

14 December 2020

Today

1. The Starting Point

2. Government Direction

3. A Pathway to Hope

4. Status Update

5. Governance

Children, Youth, Young Adults and their Families are Suffering



- **Prevalence of Child and Youth Mental Health Concerns**

An estimated 84,000, or 12.6% of children and youth aged 4-17 experience mental health disorders, and only 26,000, or 31% of these young people are receiving specialized mental health services. (Waddell, 2015)

- **Prevalence of Severe Youth Substance use**

5% of youth hospital stays in Canada in 2017-2018 were related to harm caused by substance use. (CIHI, 2019)

- **Service Gaps Result in Youth in Crisis at Hospitals**

From 2009-2017, there was an 86% increase in hospitalization for mental health and substance use issues for youth under 25. (HLTH – DAD extract)

- **Early Intervention is Key**

50% of people with a substance use disorder in Canada experienced substance use issues before the age of 20 (CAMH, 2020)

70% of mental health problems have their onset during childhood or adolescence (Public Health Agency of Canada)

Page 06 of 30

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

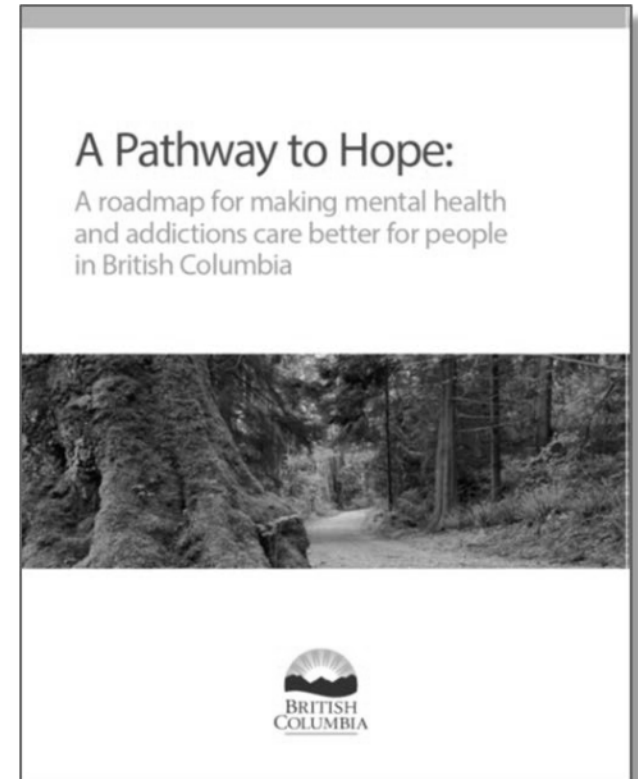
Government Direction

Cabinet: Approved cross-ministry policy to implement an integrated system of care province-wide.

Treasury Board: Approved Budget 2019 funding for MCFD, EDUC, HLTH and MMHA to implement and model the system of care in five school districts to start.

A Pathway to Hope

- *Ten year vision* and roadmap that sets long term direction for a new system of care
- Supported by a series of *actions over three years*, organized into four areas of focus to get us started
- Emphasis on *prevention, promotion and early intervention*
- Setting the direction and a *call to action for all of society*
- Building on *existing* initiatives and implementing *new, innovative* approaches



Improved Wellness for Children, Youth and Young Adults - Initiatives

- Mental Health in Schools
- Enhance programming in early childhood development centres*
- Establish Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) Teams*
- Expand Foundry centres
- Increase step up/down supports*
- Expand Confident Parents: Thriving Kids
- Launch 24/7 counselling and referral line for post-secondary students (Here2Talk.ca)
- Develop social and emotional development tools and awareness
- Expand and enhance perinatal substance use services

* Implemented in five school districts

Page 10 of 30

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Enhancements to Early Childhood Intervention Services

Early childhood intervention services are being enhanced through the addition of up to 21 FTEs in the 5 communities where Integrated Child and Youth Teams are being implemented.

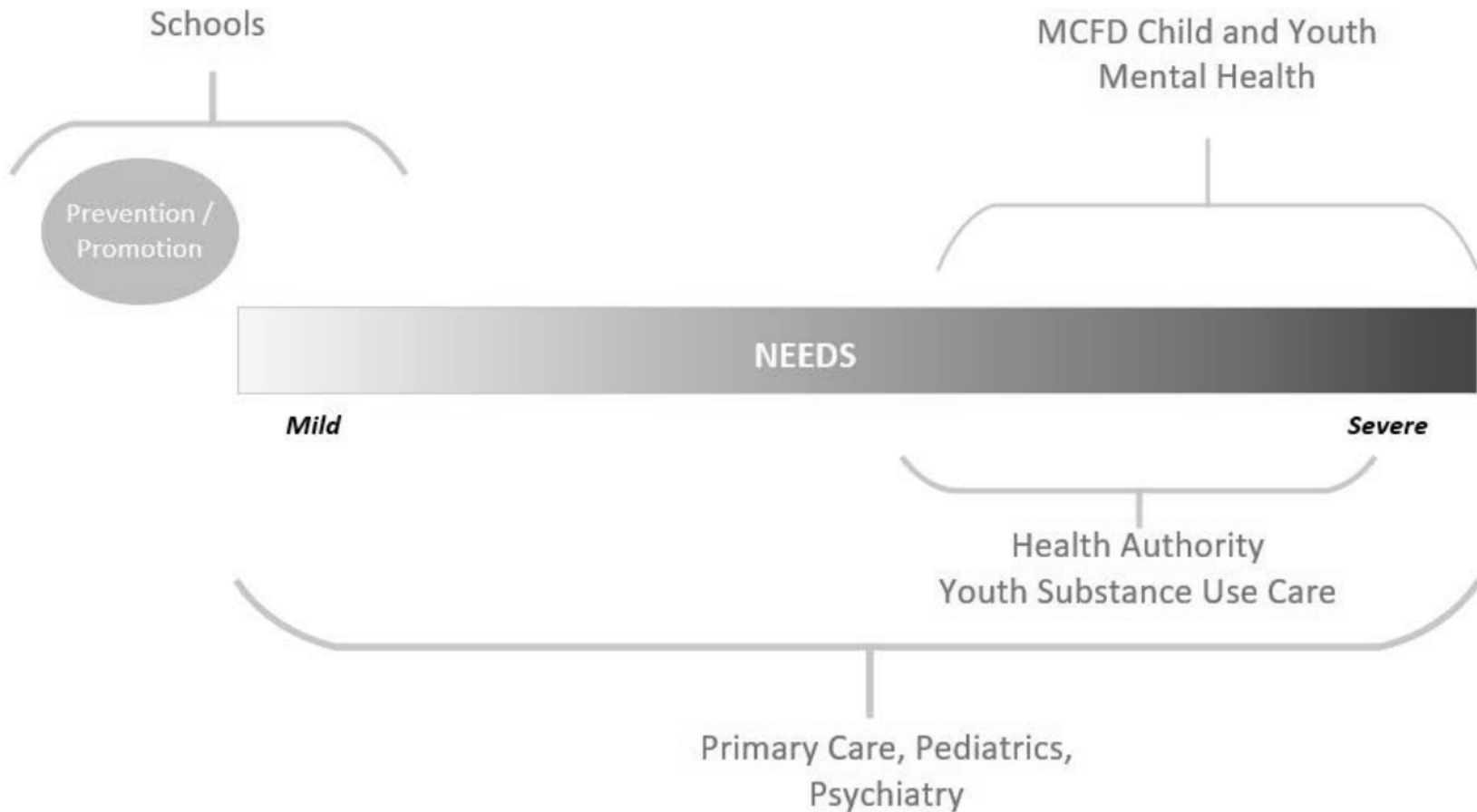


This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

Integrated Child and Youth Teams

- Connect children and youth to services **early**
- Share information among team members through a **common plan** to eliminate the need for young people and families to navigate multiple services and retell their stories with every interaction
- Provide **wraparound** care that considers all of the facets of a young person's life and MHSU needs
- Ensure cultural safety and humility, trauma-informed practice, child and youth centered care embedded within practice
- Support for the **family and caregivers**

Current State of Community-Based Care



Page 14 of 30 to/à Page 15 of 30

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Integrated Child and Youth Teams

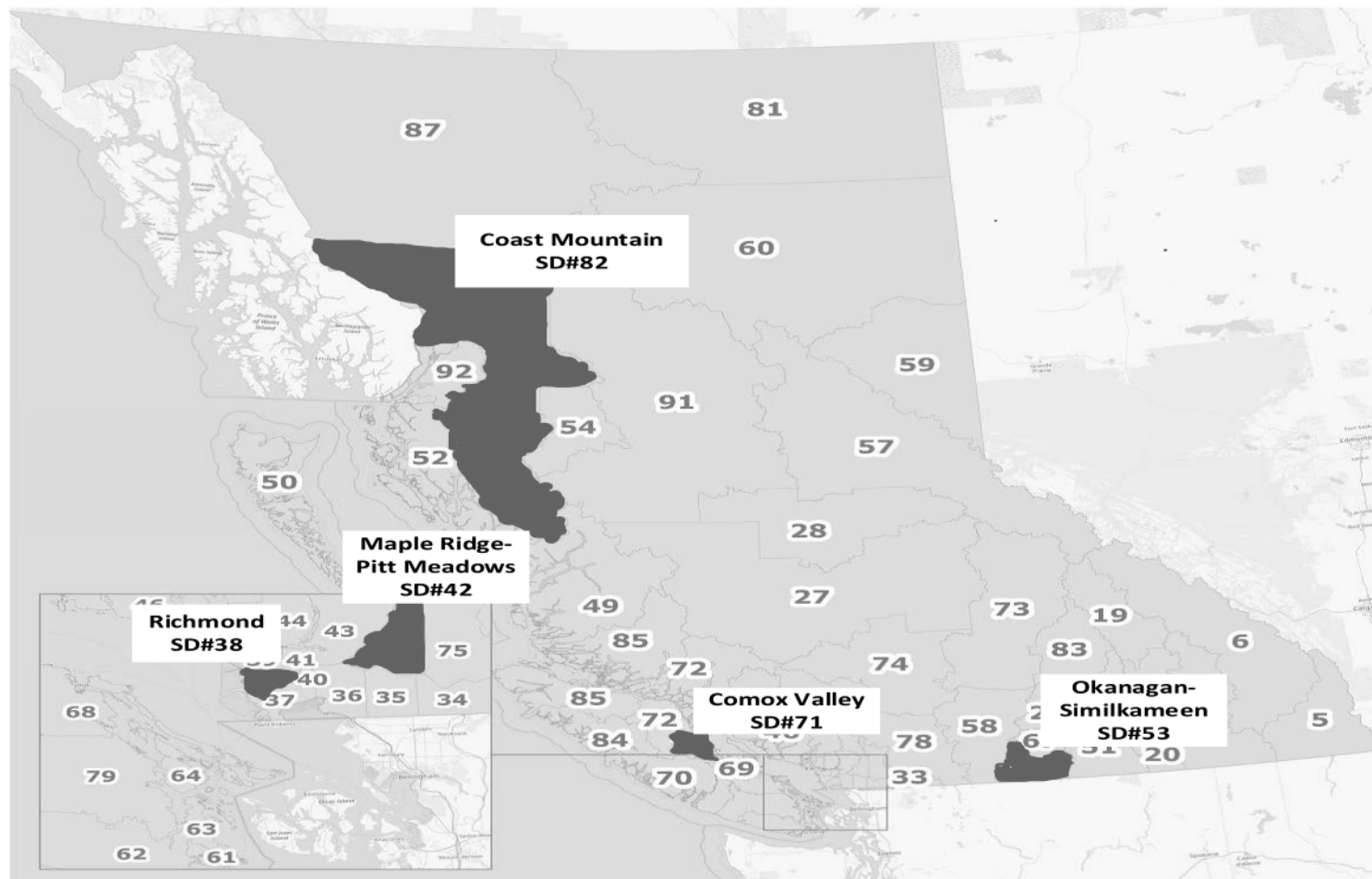
Structure

- One or more teams per school district
- Multidisciplinary
- Connected to a cluster of schools
- Integrated with Foundry
- Pathways to primary care and higher intensity/more specialized services

Practice

- Youth and family-centred
- Outbound
- Stepped care – principle of least intrusive care applies
- Strength-based – building on existing local service delivery strengths and partnerships

ICY Team Locations



ICY Teams – Work Accomplished

- Established Provincial Support Office
- Selected five communities/school districts
- Completed Integrated Service Delivery Framework
- Completed Essential Structures of ICY Teams Guiding Document
- Created local governance structures in Comox Valley and Maple Ridge
- Hired Program Developers in Comox Valley and Maple Ridge
- Initiated work in Okanagan Similkameen, Coast Mountain and Richmond
- Developing Operational Policy through established Working Group
- Assigned the number of teams per district and the standard composition of teams

Page 19 of 30

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Foundry Youth Centres

- 11 centres open
- Defined integrated stepped care model
- Over 140 partners involved
- Commitment to increase cultural safety and humility in centres
- Supported by provincial, federal and philanthropic funding



Foundry Model

- Network of centres supported by a provincial coordinating entity (Foundry Central Office)
- Centres provide suite of integrated, youth-friendly services under a single roof for ages 12-24
- Program of Providence Health Care
- Core centre funding provides the “glue”, with most services provided by partners (MCFD, SDPR, health authorities, primary care, lead agencies)



One Stop Shop for Youth Friendly Services

Foundry Expansion

Burns Lake
Comox Valley
Cranbrook
Langley
Squamish
Surrey
Port Hardy
William's Lake



Commitment to expand to 19 centres

Foundry Population Served

10,868 total youth were served by Foundry in 2019/20:

- 62% were female, 29% were male, and 9% did not identify as female or male (i.e. non-binary, trans male, trans female, two-spirit, agender)
- 13% of youth accessing Foundry were Indigenous

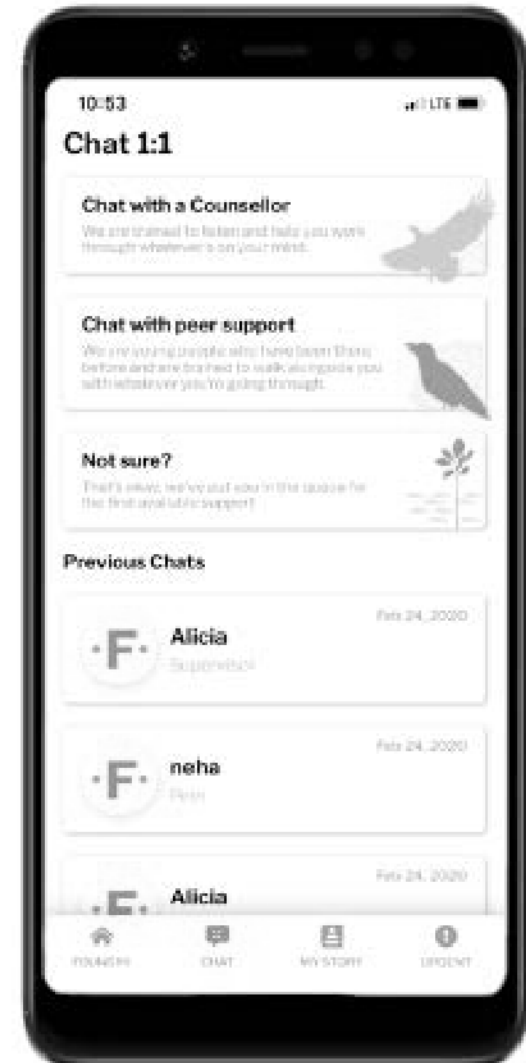
8,203 youth have been served already during the first half of 2020/21

- 58% of incoming clients have not accessed mental health or substance use care in the year prior
- 28% of all incoming Foundry clients do not have access to a regular primary care doctor
- 25% of clients report they would have nowhere else to go if Foundry was unavailable
- Vulnerable youth groups and served by Foundry. 34% of clients report experiencing violence in the three months prior to intake. In addition, a high percentage (8%) of youth have also experienced homelessness in the month prior to coming to Foundry.

Foundry Virtual Clinic

The Foundry Virtual Clinic is a provincial initiative that:

- Enables young people between the age of 12 to 24, living across BC to access health and social services virtually
- Aims at making all the services available at a Foundry centre available online
- Improves access and reduce barriers for young people who:
 - ✓ May not have access to services in their community
 - ✓ Are unable to access in-person services
 - ✓ Prefer access support online



VC (Interim) - April 16 2020 to October 30 2020

Service Utilization Statistics

606

Unique Youth
Accessed

1032

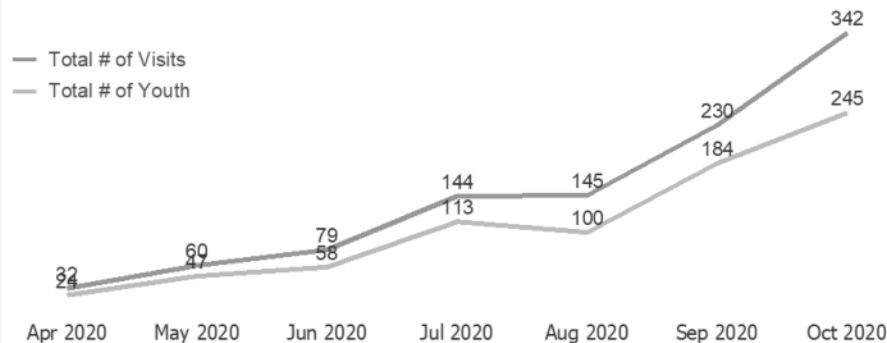
Visits
*excludes 171 No Shows

1,041

Services
Accessed

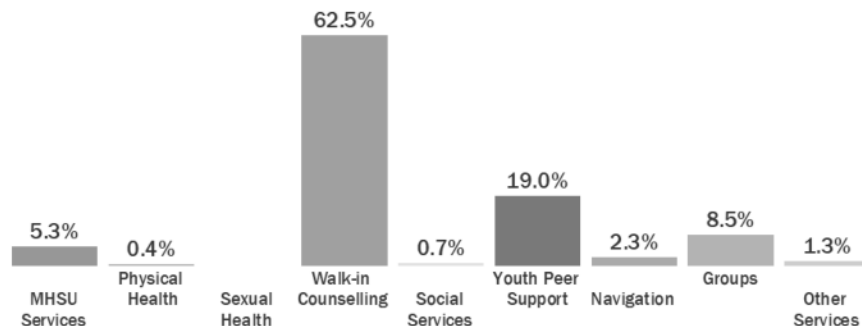
Total Youth and Total Visits by Month

*excludes 168 booked appointments with no show



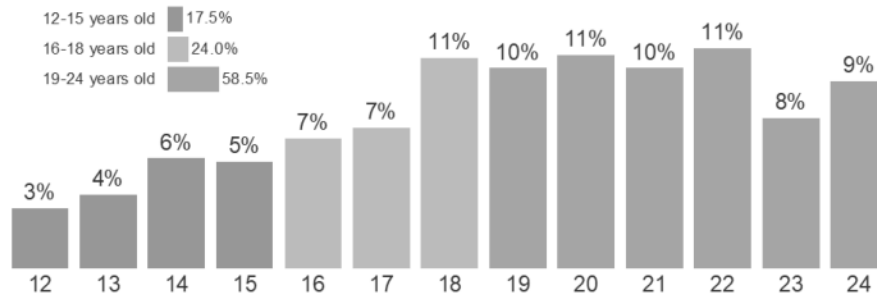
Services Accessed by Service Type (n = 949)

*Excludes 92 services to be categorized

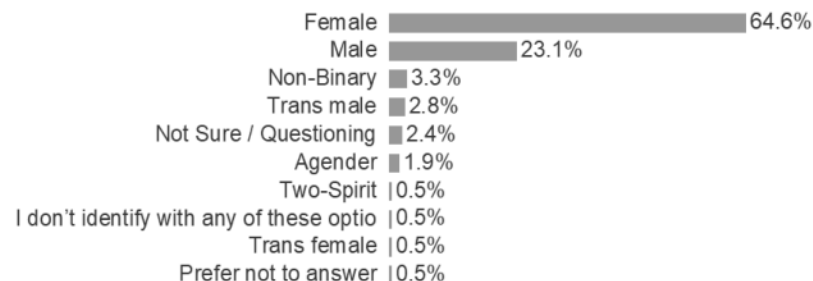


Characteristics of Youth Receiving Services

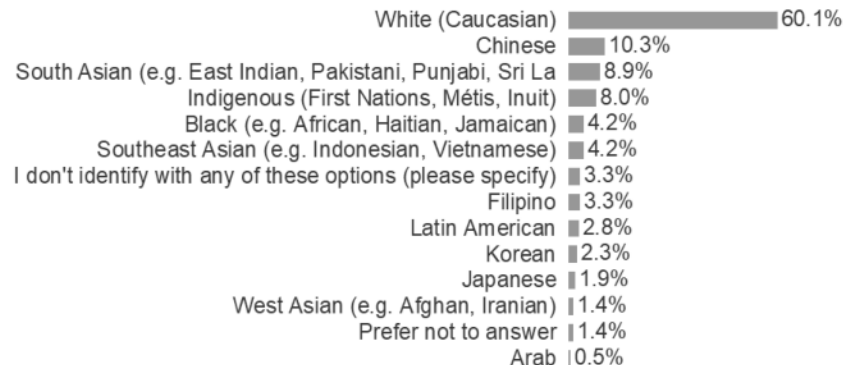
Age at Registration (n = 600)



Gender Identification (n = 212)



Ethnic/Cultural Background (n = 213)



Page 26 of 30

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Step-up/Step-down Supports



- An intensive service that bridges between community based care and hospitalizations for children and youth with significant mental health and/or problematic substance use needs
- *A Pathway to Hope* commitment to increase step up-step down supports is described as creating 20 family care home spaces and 2 intensive day treatment programs

Page 28 of 30 to/à Page 29 of 30

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Questions and Discussion



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

DATE: January 18, 2021
CLIFF#: 257178

DATES OF PREVIOUS NOTES: N/A
PREVIOUS CLIFF: N/A

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

s.17; s.21

s.14; s.17; s.21

s.17; s.21

s.17; s.21

Contact

Assistant Deputy Minister:

Cory Heavener

Provincial Director of Child

Welfare and Aboriginal

Services

778.698.5126

.....

.....

Page 3 of 3

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.17 ; s.21

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

DATE: January 19, 2021
CLIFF#: # 257193

DATE OF PREVIOUS NOTE: May 25, 2020
PREVIOUS CLIFF # 247940

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

ISSUE: Comparison of Huu-ay-aht First Nations Housing Request and Sts'ailes Model

BACKGROUND:

Huu-ay-aht First Nations (HFN) are located on Barkley Sound near Bamfield, BC, and are part of the Nuu-chah-nulth cultural group. HFN are one of five First Nations that ratified the Maa-nulth Final Agreement (Maa-nulth Treaty), which came into effect on April 1, 2011. HFN's total registered population is 732 persons.

Under the Maa-nulth Treaty, HFN has law-making authority over child protection and adoption yet has not passed laws under either of these authorities. HFN have been receiving services (for some, but not all, of their communities) from Usma Nuu-chah-nulth Family & Child Services (Usma), a fully delegated Aboriginal agency, since April 2014.

Sts'ailes is an independent nation located in Fraser Cascade Local Services Area spanning a Reserve area of 916 hectares. Currently Sts'ailes has 1092 registered members of which 562 are on-Reserve, and 530 off-Reserve.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has had a close working relationship with Sts'ailes since 2004 with the creation of specialized Indigenous Service team. In July 2009 the Snowoyelh House was acquired and became the center of operations. At this time MCFD entered into a lease agreement being co-located in Snowoyelh House. The MCFD co-located staff consist of a Team Leader, 2 Social Workers, and 0.5 FTE Admin Team Assistant.

DISCUSSION:

s.14; s.16; s.17

s.16; s.17

STEPS:

s.16

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Appendix A - Te Lalum Brochure
- B. Appendix B - Oomiiqsu Discussion Paper
- C. Appendix C - 247940 IBN MKC HFN Housing Request

Contact**Assistant Deputy Minister:**

*Denise Devenny
Assistant Deputy Minister
Partnership and Indigenous
Engagement Division*

778 698-4956

**Alternate Contact
for content:**

*Tiffany Hamilton
Director, Indigenous
Engagement Branch*

778 698-7698

Prepared by:

*Denise Devenny
ADM, Partnership and
Indigenous Engagement
Division*

778 698-4956

Page 04 of 20 to/à Page 05 of 20

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

Copyright

Page 06 of 20 to/à Page 12 of 20

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.16

Page 13 of 20 to/à Page 15 of 20

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.16 ; s.17

Page 16 of 20

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.16

Page 17 of 20 to/à Page 18 of 20

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.16 ; s.17

Page 19 of 20 to/à Page 20 of 20

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.16