



Community Services
Office of the Minister

PO Box 696, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2T7 • www.gov.ns.ca

Ms. Barb Horner
Disability Rights Coalition NS
2815 Connaught Ave
Halifax, NS B3L 2Z9

NOV 18 2019

Dear Ms. Horner:

Thank you for your letter to the Honourable Stephen McNeil received September 2019, regarding this Government's commitment to persons with disabilities and the Transformation Roadmap. The Premier has requested that I respond to you on his behalf as Minister of Community Services.

I am pleased to share with you that we are making progress on the Roadmap and continue to implement changes to realize the goals of greater self-direction, choice and control for persons with disabilities and their families, including:

- Offering individualized funding in the following programs: Direct Family Support for Children (DFSC), Flex Independent and Flex At Home, Independent Living Supports (ILS) and Alternative Family Support (AFS). Third party administration of funding is available in ILS through 29 approved service providers and the Flex Programs offer a direct funding option whereby participants are provided funding to purchase their own supports and services.
- New Respite Supports and Navigation Service: launched in 2018 for both adults and children to support participants and families in locating a service provider who is best suited to their particular needs and circumstances.
- Lifting the cap on the Enhanced Family Support Program, thereby allowing DSP to clear the waitlist for families who need extra support for their child.
- Transitioning more than 150 participants from large facilities to more independent and/or assisted living, community-based programs.
- Moving to an evidence based adult assessment methodology (InterRAI) which lays the foundation for rolling out individualized program funding through other DSP programs.

I would like to clarify and address your concern that the planning work for large facility closure has exclusively involved "the people who run the institutions". While the organizations that currently operate the large facilities were involved in the process, we also engaged participants, families, municipalities, and the Department of Health and Wellness. At the same time, we clearly heard from many participants and families that, given existing relationships, they felt strongly that current service providers and staff need to continue to be involved in the lives of participants when they transition to community.

You also expressed concern about the use of pilot projects. I want to assure you our two most recent pilot projects (Enhanced In Home Supports for Children and Youth Day Programming) are not intended as short-term fixes, but rather are testing an approach for addressing well-known gaps in the current system. These pilots will be evaluated, and the results will inform long term program design.

In closing, I want to reaffirm our commitment to improving the lives of persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia based on the guidance of the Transformation Roadmap.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Regan".

Hon. Kelly Regan
Minister

c: Hon. Stephen McNeil (PNS-04246-V5Z7R1/CRM:0404949)
Tim Houston, MLA, Pictou East
Gary Burrill, MLA, Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley
Thomas Trappenberg, Leader of the Green Party