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**Proceedings of the Standing Committee on  
Social Services**

April 25, 2018 - Issue 4

Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development  
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation

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## **SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development

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Chair: Carol Anne Haley, MHA

Members: David Brazil, MHA  
Jerry Dean, MHA  
Betty Parsley, MHA  
Kevin Parsons, MHA  
Scott Reid, MHA  
Gerry Rogers, MHA  
Brian Warr, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Elizabeth Murphy

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Appearing:

### **Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development**

Hon. Lisa Dempster, MHA, Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development  
Donna Ballard, Deputy Minister  
Dana English, Executive Assistant  
Steve French, Manager of Budgeting  
Derek Bennett, MHA, Parliamentary Secretary  
Michelle Healey, Director, Recreation and Sport  
Harman Khurana, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Vanessa Colman-Sadd, Director of Communications  
Wanda Trickett, Departmental Controller  
Susan Walsh, Assistant Deputy Minister

### **Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation**

Hon. Lisa Dempster, MHA, Minister Responsible for the NLHC  
Glenn Goss, CEO (Interim)  
Jenny Bowring, Manager, Corporate Communications  
Heather Harding, Director  
Doug Jackman, Director

### **Also Present**

Paul Lane, MHA  
Jim Lester, MHA  
Tracey Perry, MHA  
Megan Drodge, Researcher, Official Opposition Office  
Susan Williams, Researcher, Third Party Office

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Tracey Perry, MHA for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, substitutes for David Brazil, MHA for Conception Bay East - Bell Island.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Jim Lester, MHA for Mount Pearl North, substitutes for Kevin Parsons, MHA for Cape St. Francis.

The Committee met at 5:30 p.m. in the Assembly Chamber.

**CHAIR (Haley):** Okay, we'll get underway.

Good evening everyone. Thank you all for joining us.

We are here this evening for the review of the Estimates of the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing.

We have a couple of substitutions this evening. We have Ms. Perry substituting for Mr. Brazil and Mr. Lester substituting for Mr. Parsons.

There are three hours of time allotted for this review. We'll start by asking the Committee to introduce themselves.

**MS. PERRY:** Tracey Perry, MHA, Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

**MS. DRODGE:** Megan Drodge, Researcher with the Official Opposition caucus.

**MR. LESTER:** Jim Lester, MHA, Mount Pearl North.

**MR. REID:** Scott Reid, St. George's - Humber.

**MS. ROGERS:** Gerry Rogers. I work for the good people of St. John's Centre.

**MS. WILLIAMS:** Susan Williams, Researcher, NDP.

**MS. PARSLEY:** Betty Parsley, MHA, Harbour Main.

**MR. WARR:** Brian Warr, Baie Verte - Green Bay.

**MR. DEAN:** Jerry Dean, MHA, Exploits.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Minister Dempster, if you want to take a few minutes to provide some opening remarks and introduce your officials, of course, there's a time allotment of 15 minutes for this. Once you're finished, we'll go back and forth.

The first responder will have 15 minutes then we'll go back 10, 10, and 10 – or 10 and 10 this evening. We don't have the independent.

Ms. Dempster.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm so used to being in your seat that I feel like I want to call the Estimates. I'll have to adjust.

I'll provide some opening remarks but, first, I'll just start right here and ask my staff to introduce themselves.

**MR. GOSS:** Hi, I'm Glenn Goss, Interim Chair of the Housing Corporation.

**MS. HARDING:** Heather Harding, Director of Program Delivery.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Doug Jackman, Director of Finance.

**MS. COLMAN-SADD:** Vanessa Colman-Sadd, Director of Communications for Children, Seniors and Social Development.

**MS. ENGLISH:** Dana English, Executive Assistant to the minister.

**MR. BENNETT:** Derek Bennett, MHA, Lewisporte – Twillingate and parliamentary secretary.

**MS. BOWRING:** Jenny Bowring, Communications Manager, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Thank you, Staff.

Good evening everyone. It's my first time as a minister for doing the Estimates so you may want to be a little patient with me. I have a good team around me if there's something that I don't know. We'll settle in for three hours.

I'll just start by saying as Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation I am pleased to appear before you to discuss this year's Estimates for the corporation. The officials have already introduced themselves. I'll say that our government understands that safe, stable and affordable housing is fundamental to the socio-economic well-being of our people. Some of you would have heard me say that a number of times in the House.

We also recognize that finding and maintaining a suitable home can be a daily challenge for some. In response, *Budget 2018* has provided significant investment that enables the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation to provide housing, programs and services to assist households with low incomes, persons with disabilities, persons with complex needs and those experiencing or most at risk of becoming homeless.

There are two or three highlights from Budget 2018-19 that I'll share: \$10.2 million for maintenance, repair and upkeep for public housing properties to ensure safe and high-quality homes are available to our tenants; and \$3.6 million to modernize and renovate public rental housing to sustain the housing inventory over the long term. \$2.7 million will be invested to leverage federal funding and enable Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation to continue developing affordable housing options under the Investment in Affordable Housing by partnering with affordable housing developers in the private and non-profit sectors. Since 2004, in excess of 1,500 new affordable units have been created through this program. By 2019, an additional 135 units will be created. That will be bringing the total to almost 1,700 units.

This year's investment of \$8.2 million in our Home Repair Program will enable us to continue assisting households with low incomes by providing funding to help them bring their homes up to minimum fire and life safety standards or improve accessibility. It's noteworthy to mention about 89 per cent of program recipients are seniors. These options enable them to continue living independently in their own homes and communities and close to family and friends.

This year's budget also provides \$10.9 million for the Rent Supplement Program. This includes an additional \$2 million over 10 years to further increase the number of rent supplements and to support a portable rent supplement pilot program, which is something we have been hearing individuals ask for, for some time. This program supports individuals and families with low incomes and individuals with complex needs. By partnering with private landlords, the program enables lower-income households to avail of increased housing options.

Approximately 54 per cent of rent supplement housing units are occupied by seniors, so you can see the theme. Seniors are a majority of the group that we provide a service to here in most of the programs.

*Budget 2018* has committed \$8.6 million to the Supportive Living Program and the Provincial Homelessness Fund. Currently, the Supportive Living Program enables 21 non-profit community-based groups, operating 34 projects throughout the province, to prevent and end homelessness through what we refer to as a housing-first approach, whereby individuals are housed with minimal conditions and provided individualized supports to foster long-term housing stability. The Provincial Homelessness Fund provides annual funding to non-profit organizations, enabling them to provide on-site outreach services designed to promote housing stability and ensure greater self-reliance among those that are at-risk of homelessness.

*Budget 2018* will enable the Housing Corporation to continue its \$2 million investment to the Home Energy Savings Program. We had a huge uptake from that program. Through this program, grants are provided to low-income households for cost-effective home upgrades designed to improve energy efficiency. This initiative is targeted to assist electrically heated households with low incomes to upgrade their homes and help them improve energy efficiency.

This will be of particular importance as these households will be – it goes without saying – among the most vulnerable to increased electricity costs when Muskrat Falls comes online. Future electricity rate management is certainly a priority for this government. We have instructed Nalcor to explore and pursue all

options to help us achieve this goal for the people of the province.

I don't know how I'm doing for time, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR:** Yeah, you're good.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Okay.

Our government is also making it easier for new homebuyers to purchase their first home. Through the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, we recently announced a First-Time Homebuyer's Program, which includes financing for a down payment and a \$2,000 grant for eligible first-time homebuyers to purchase a new or existing home.

The First-Time Homebuyer's Program replaces the former Downpayment Assistance Program. It has been extended – I think St. John's Centre had asked me this question earlier – to the end of March in 2019. With available funding of \$1.25 million provided by *Budget 2018*, the program will assist an estimated 100 households to secure home ownership.

Government has also allocated \$1 million to NLHC to administer a new Home Purchase Program which will provide \$3,000 in grants to 330 households towards the purchase of a newly constructed or never-sold home under \$400,000, including the HST.

Through *Budget 2018* government has continued its \$11.8 million commitment to support initiatives and not-for-profit groups engaged in the delivery of transitional and emergency housing. This is something new that's coming under Housing.

Effective June 1 NLHC will assume responsibility for the coordination of access to emergency shelters and accommodations from the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour, as well as accountability and support of transitional houses from the regional health authority. Those are two new areas that will be folding in. We believe that moving more of the housing continuum pieces under one roof will further improve collaboration and coordination of emergency shelter and housing for the homeless.

As minister responsible for NLHC I'm happy to share that we recently endorsed a federal, provincial and territorial housing partnership framework. This commitment addresses the housing needs of Canadians, particularly those of vulnerable populations. Housing construction and repair investments – as we all know here – provide important economic benefits for communities and critical housing assistance to those in need. This endorsement enables us to negotiate a new partnership agreement and deliver National Housing Strategy funding through our forthcoming provincial housing and homelessness plan this fall. Our allocation will be finalized through a bilateral agreement. I am confident in saying that I believe it will represent historic levels of investment to this province.

As part of *The Way Forward*, government committed to review NLHC's programs and services. The review primarily focused on public sector efficiency and better services. Extensive consultation and input from community partners, tenants, clients and employees was critical to the final review initiatives. The review was conducted to realize efficiencies, improve services and streamline the organization with no negative impact on clients on the front line, optimize federal and provincial funding in the delivery of programs and services and ensure the organization's mandate reflects current priorities.

I do have a final sheet to run through if time permits.

**CHAIR:** Yeah, you're good. You have five minutes.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Efficiencies and savings of \$1.4 million annually were realized through elimination of 14 of the 76 management positions at NLHC – an 18 per cent reduction. This renewed structure reduces annual operating costs while continuing to deliver housing programs and services to those most in need.

The review has helped identify ways to provide better services, including – and I'll mention five items here: Extend the First-Time Homebuyer's Program which replaces the former Downpayment Assistance Program, improve the Rent Supp Program, increase the supply of

affordable housing, improve supports to community centres and partner with the community to prevent and end homelessness.

As an organization, NLHC has been and will continue to work with community stakeholders to develop housing initiatives for the people of this province. This is an approach which has enabled us to create the comprehensive policies and programs which are addressing the complex challenges associated with providing safe and affordable housing to people with low incomes and to those most at risk of becoming homeless. We are seeing results from this approach and we will continue to build on our current success.

Thank you for listening to me for 12 minutes. I now welcome the opportunity to have myself or staff answer any questions you might have.

**CHAIR:** Mr. Lester.

**MR. LESTER:** Thank you for those (inaudible).

Could I have the privilege of getting a copy of your speaking notes, please?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, not a problem.

**MR. LESTER:** Thank you.

In relation to the increase of Grants and Subsidies, how much of the increase is due to the increased cost of providing the same services versus increase in funding levels?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I'm having trouble hearing you.

**MR. LESTER:** Oh, sorry. I think I have a bit of an echo.

In relation to Grants and Subsidies there is a substantial increase over that of last year. How much of that is directly related to new funding versus the increased cost of providing the same services from last year.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I'm going to let Glenn speak to that, just to make sure I don't –

**MR. LESTER:** Sure.

**MR. GOSS:** If I might, I believe I understand your question. If I don't, you can let me know. It's essentially new funding. There's little in the way of increased budgets due to increased costs. Most of the increases to our grant have to do with, for example, the provincial portion of the Social Infrastructure Fund, which was a federal-provincial partnership for '16-'17 and '17-'18.

\$14 million of that is provincial money that is going to be expended this particular year. As the minister mentioned, \$11.8 million comes to us from Health and Community Services and AES as a result of us taking on transitional and emergency housing.

There are a number of other items in here: the Home Energy Savings Program as the minister announced and the Home Purchase Program as the minister announced. I'm sure Doug will straighten me out, but there's no funding in terms of the cost of programs increasing, so the budget increasing, if that's what you're asking.

**MR. LESTER:** Yes, that was my question.

It's a money transfer from AES?

**MR. GOSS:** That's a big part of it.

**MR. LESTER:** That's almost half and then the other half is the infrastructure fund that exists.

**MR. GOSS:** Is the infrastructure funding, yeah. Then you have the Home Purchase Program, the energy assistance program and one or two other items.

**MR. LESTER:** Okay, great.

Those are basically my financial questions there for now; I would like to have the opportunity to ask at a later time upon further review of the speaker notes. I do have some general questions. If you could provide answers for those, it would be appreciated.

In relation to staffing, how many new hires were there in Housing overall last year?

**MR. GOSS:** Generally, we've replaced – I don't have the number, Sir. What I can tell you is that our staff complement has reduced, from one

year to the next, from 343 last year to 323 this year. It's a reduction of 20.

However, we have hired new individuals. If, for example, an employee retires or leaves for whatever reason from a particular position and we find that we need another type of position filled – for example, the transition and emergency housing is coming to Housing so we need somebody to be able to take that over – the funding from the vacated position could be put towards that. It's a new hire but no net increase in employees. As matter of fact, over the past year we've had a net decrease in employees of 20.

**MR. LESTER:** Okay.

**MR. GOSS:** I hope that answers your question.

**MR. LESTER:** Yes, it does.

I may be out of line in asking this – but I, like the minister, it's my first time here doing this – are there any initiatives within the department to look at cost efficiencies attained from contracting out certain services that employees of the corporation are now providing?

**MR. GOSS:** Yeah, I think it's safe to say that we constantly do that.

As we spoke earlier, our programming budgets have not increased; however, sometimes the needs have increased. We are looking for better ways to spend the money. Sometimes the better way is to contract, depending on the details of the job; sometimes it's better to do it with internal staff. We're constantly looking at that sort of thing, adjusting our manpower and our staffing to meet whatever need comes up. So to answer your question, it's difficult to tell you if we have a particular plan. We're constantly assessing where best to spend the money.

**MR. LESTER:** It is a process.

**MR. GOSS:** It is a process, yeah.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Just to build on that one. We contract some services right now, right?

**MR. LESTER:** Mm-mmm.

**MR. GOSS:** Yes, yeah.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** In some instances, yeah.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yeah. One thing, too (inaudible) operations in certain communities in (inaudible), 100 percent is contracted because none of our own employees are close to the locations. So in that case – and there are certain types of services that we completely contract out.

**MR. LESTER:** Would those services be advertised in the form of a tender or do you have a list of suppliers you just call?

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yeah, depending on the estimated monetary value of the services, it could take the form of a tender. It could go through a quotation process, a request for quotations, or it also could be us relying on a province wide – like a Government of Newfoundland standing offer, depending on the nature.

**MR. LESTER:** Okay, great.

How many units have been converted from – I understand there's a big transition from multi-bedroom family units to singular, often one or two people living alone in a unit. Do we have outlying goals as to how many units we want to do per year, and did we meet that quota last year?

**MR. GOSS:** (Inaudible) but a few years ago we had a pilot project. What we call it is regeneration, where we regenerate a four-bedroom unit into two twos, or a three and a one. That sort of thing.

**MR. LESTER:** Yeah.

**MR. GOSS:** We did that with \$1 million three or four years ago. I don't have the details with me, but we did one here in St. John's, in Mundy Pond area, where we renovated a duplex. It is two three-bedroom duplexes to two two-bedrooms on the bottom and two ones on the top without changing the footprint of the building. So we got four units out of two.

We did a similar one in Mount Pearl on Spruce Avenue where we did a similar type of thing.

We got four units out of two. In Corner Brook we did one where we took three units and made two out of it. One being on the bottom being fully accessible. That's why we assumed the second unit to give them more room, and the upper one being a single unit.

What we found was that it addresses the need of our wait-list. It helps address the need of our wait-list where 90 per cent of them are one and two bedroom requirements, and 80 some-odd per cent of our units are three and four bedrooms. So it helps address the demographic need, but it does cost money, obviously. I don't want to speak out of school, but going forward we're hopeful that as part of the national strategy that will also be a significant portion of what we do, helping us meet the demographic need though that type of regeneration.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** (Inaudible) weeks ago the provincial and territorial ministers endorsed the principles of the housing framework, the multilateral, but now each province will start the work of working out the bilaterals. Some of that is to be determined as we move along in that process.

**MR. LESTER:** Okay.

Again, a question: Has there been a comparison done to a demolition rebuild versus a reno? Is there a big difference cost wise?

**MR. GOSS:** There's not a big difference, generally speaking. However, in some instances, again, it will depend on what we're dealing with. We have in situations done a complete strip down to the foundation and rebuilt. We have done that. Generally, that has to do with multiunit buildings where there's been extensive rot, that sort of thing. We've done that.

We have built some units. We built four over in the Vickers Avenue area, which we made them accessible, universal design and accessible, and we tried to integrate them into the neighbourhood. We're also replacing a number of units that, if you may remember the fire in Froude Avenue area. We're replacing them, trying to fit it in with – so we'd replace them with new.

We have built some new in Corner Brook. Again, that's another area we can certainly look at going forward. In terms of a plan, there's got to be funding and land associated with any major plan going forward and we're hopeful that's going to be addressed in the coming strategy.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I'm not sure if you said this already, but we have just under 5,600 units and I think I'm correct in saying that about 80 per cent of them are considered in good condition.

**MR. LESTER:** Okay.

All right. Again, you may have said this in your speaker's notes. I apologize if it's repetition, if the answer is already presented.

What stage are we at in allocation of the new housing construction and purchase program? Has any of those funds been allocated as of yet or is the deadline and applications still rolling?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I can let Heather speak to it directly.

What I understand, applications are coming in and they're just starting the process but no money has actually been paid out yet.

**MS. HARDING:** That's correct. The Home Purchase Program –

**MR. LESTER:** Yes.

**MS. HARDING:** – we've received about 25 applications to date for that. For the First-Time Homebuyer's Program –

**MR. LESTER:** Yes

**MS. HARDING:** – we've received 151 applications and have actually closed the program. So we're in the process of processing those.

**MR. LESTER:** Okay.

Will the processing and evaluation of applications, is that done entirely by bureaucracy or are MHAs involved, that type of thing?



**MS. HARDING:** For the First-Time Homebuyer's Program and the Home Purchase Program, that's strictly done on first-come, first-served basis, and if they meet the criteria there's no other evaluation. So it's strictly in-house.

**MR. LESTER:** Okay, great.

Have we noticed any real change in demand in any specific geographical area throughout the province?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I guess if we look at wait-lists, we've got about 765 that are on the wait-list and most of that pressure – and I guess historically this is how it's always been, maybe this is where the population numbers are – it would be the Avalon, correct?

**MR. LESTER:** Yes, okay.

That number of people on the wait-list, is that like an historical average or would it –?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Actually, I'm not here very long in this position, but I understand our numbers on the wait-list are down significantly. We have 765 and, I'm not sure, if you go back a couple of years that was much higher, right?

**MR. GOSS:** Yes, that's essentially correct. The numbers have decreased. Historically, they're lower in most of the geographical areas but the percentage is still the same across the board. For argument's sake, we have the most wait-lists in St. John's. Then you have the Corner Brook area, then you have Central and so on into the smaller communities. The percentage probably hasn't changed but the actual figure itself has reduced.

**MR. LESTER:** There's basically a general change overall from throughout the whole province. It's not on the Avalon we're seeing an exponential spike versus an exponential decline in west or north.

**MR. GOSS:** Yes, if I may, Minister.

You're right. It has reduced across the province, probably relatively equally in terms of percentage. I think I could probably relate that to the fact that we're building probably almost 1,700 affordable housing units across the

province through private and non-profit. They are taking people who are eligible to apply for housing. They are impacting our wait-lists also. I think that's probably where the most significant impact has been over the last number of years.

**MR. LESTER:** Of the 5,600 units, how many of those will be considered accessible, barrier free?

**MR. GOSS:** If you'll just give me one minute. Yeah, there you go.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** There's a breakdown by region, by private sector and non-profit. Under the Investment in Affordable Housing 270 fully accessible units have been constructed in 47 communities across the province, in both the private and – I have the breakdown as well which you will get when you get the binder at the end.

**MR. LESTER:** Is an energy audit something that you would consider for all of the Housing units, an individual energy audit on each unit?

**MR. GOSS:** It isn't something that we've started a plan for, but it is something that whenever we do major renovations, it is built into the plan.

**MR. LESTER:** Okay.

**MR. GOSS:** There's a certain R-value. The lighting that goes in is considered energy efficient. Any items or appliances that may be put in would be energy efficient. When we go in to do just general maintenance on a unit – for argument's sake, somebody moves out. Before somebody moves in we do general maintenance to make it ready where we can. But we're not going to tear out walls to increase the R-value just because somebody is moving in.

Where there is new construction, we built it into the plans. There has to be energy efficiency components. As well, anything that we're doing major renovations on, as I said, we'll do energy-efficiency components.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. Your time has expired.

Ms. Rogers?

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you very much.

Of the 765 people on the wait-list – and I’m sure 760 of them live in St. John’s Centre – who’s on the wait-list? Is it seniors, is it for single, one-bedroom housing?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Twenty-six per cent of all the applications are from seniors 65 and over.

**MS. ROGERS:** Only 26? Oh.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Only 26 per cent. That’s surprising, yeah.

**MS. ROGERS:** What other –

**MS. DEMPSTER:** It does say 80 per cent in St. John’s Centre – no.

**MS. ROGERS:** It probably does. I know I have them all living with me.

But also people looking for smaller units, for single units?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, that’s fair to say. I guess historically we had big families and we had big houses. Now we have this misfit because we have a housing stock that’s larger and we have a wait-list of people that are looking for one and two bedroom.

**MS. ROGERS:** Yeah and it’s very difficult and, then, also finding those kinds of units in the private market as well.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I believe 80 per cent that’s waiting is looking for one and two?

**MR. GOSS:** Ninety per cent.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Ninety per cent.

**MS. ROGERS:** Ninety per cent.

**MR. GOSS:** Ninety per cent of our wait-list is looking for one or two bedrooms.

**MS. ROGERS:** I know this is somewhat controversial; it’s been sort of slippery potential idea. I’ve come across folks who want to share. Who aren’t family members, but who are friends and who are single adults who are looking to

possibly share. Is there any consideration of looking at that again?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, that is something that we’re very aware of and recognize the need that people have not wanted to live together for fear of losing their benefits and things like that. That is something we’re considering or we’ve implemented?

**MS. HARDING:** Considering.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Considering, yeah. We’ve had a number of conversations around it.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay.

I imagine that’s a conversation both with Housing and with AES, is it, or Income Support?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay, great.

For some folks it’s about living not only more economically, but also happier because they have company.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** You have the companionship. That’s right, yeah.

Then you’re not one person paying the heat bill and things like that.

**MS. ROGERS:** Absolutely.

To the point that Jim had brought up about the energy audits, it’s something, certainly, that a group like Choices could do to actually do the energy audits. I think they’ve done work similar to that or the Conservation Corps has. It might be an interesting contract with non-profit organizations to actually do the energy audits.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I’ll let Heather speak to that.

**MS. HARDING:** Actually, a couple of years ago – and over a number of years – we had Train for Trades do some energy upgrades in our basements.

**MS. ROGERS:** That’s right.

**MS. HARDING:** Quite a few, 300 or 400 maybe, energy upgrades in our units.

**MS. ROGERS:** That's great.

If people are going to do energy audits – they might be able to do the energy audits as well. What is the wait-list like for accessible units?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I don't have the breakdown in front of me for accessibility. I don't know if we can get that figure? We can get that figure.

**MS. ROGERS:** Yeah, I assume it's a pretty big challenge.

**MR. GOSS:** The number of individuals who come to the Housing Corporation, specifically for the reason of accessibility, is not very high; however, there may be an affordability issue in combination with accessibility.

**MS. ROGERS:** That's right.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Up until the end of March 2018 we had 11 requests for transfer for either a fully accessible unit or a unit requiring mobility modifications.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I'll also add that we have 42 senior buildings. That's 430 units. All but two, just 22 units, are either one level or have an elevator.

**MS. ROGERS:** Minister, when you say units, are those all units owned by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing or that includes also ...?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** No.

**MS. ROGERS:** No, rent supps.

Okay, great.

I have some other questions here. Can you describe a little bit the emergency housing that you have taken on? What does that encompass?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** We're folding in – it's going to be new – from AESL. Housing is going to be the emergency shelters and transition houses. Over in Newfoundland and Labrador Housing

they have this full suite of programs; they deal with low income and they deal with seniors. It just seemed to make sense – as we talk about Housing First – that you would have this in-house expertise because you have the units and then you have sometimes the challenges that come with those tenants. It will all be housed under one roof.

**MS. ROGERS:** When you're saying transition houses would that be, for instance, Iris Kirby, or is this –?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay, so they're all going to come under Housing.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. ROGERS:** The emergency housing: Are they units or is it money to house somebody in an emergency shelter?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** That would be like the shelters around the province right now.

**MS. ROGERS:** Right.

Also, a lot of emergency housing is not just the shelters; it is places, for instance, on University Avenue, people in the private sector who provide emergency shelter. Is it?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. ROGERS:** We've seen the difference between what's on the private market for emergency housing and shelter, the difference between the quality there and what's provided by non-profit organizations.

My question is: How are you going to deal – because some of them are in my district and I've been in them, like rooming houses. Are you dealing with the rooming houses as well?

My question about that is: What's going to happen? Something has to happen around the standards that are outside of – I know that we don't yet have our Residential Tenancies Act renewed. That's one thing but if we, as the public service, are paying for emergency placements and emergency housing, and there

are horrendous, horrendous situations that some of our most vulnerable people are living in and that money is public money to house them. So if this is moving to your responsibility, how are you going to address some of those issues?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I think primarily what you're speaking to would be the placements, the rooming houses that would fall under AESL. So myself nor my staff could speak to that. Is that your understanding as well? Yeah. That would be under –

**MS. ROGERS:** So that wouldn't come under your jurisdiction.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** No.

**MS. ROGERS:** But some of it is emergency housing as well. So the private emergency housing is different than an emergency shelter that you're talking about.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Well, it's emergency shelters.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay. Just the specific shelters.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, emergency shelters. I have visited a number of the shelters around the province and I have to say they're pretty –

**MS. ROGERS:** They're fabulous.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, they're fabulous, yeah. Very decent places.

**MS. ROGERS:** They're just really good, well run. Yeah.

So this doesn't encompass those.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** No.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay. Great.

I have to put in – okay, thank you.

How many units of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing are vacant right now waiting for repairs?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Unavailable for rent, waiting for major repair would be 69 as of the first of April. There's a – the total.

**OFFICIAL:** (Inaudible) yes, that's available.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I don't know. She asked how many are waiting for repair.

**OFFICIAL:** Okay.

**MS. ROGERS:** Yes, sort of unavailable I guess.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Pardon me?

**MS. ROGERS:** Yes, unavailable.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes. So units unavailable: there would be 69 waiting for major repair; nine that are used for emergency housing; two that are for redevelopment; four pending sales, and there are three currently being used as office.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay. What was the four there again?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Four pending sales.

**MS. ROGERS:** Pending sales. So those units are being sold?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I can speak to one, and it probably aligns with all four. In some places we have some units that are very dilapidated, really beyond repair, and if it's in a rural, for instance, someone may want to buy the home, tear it down, and at least they can rebuild on a plot of land that has access to water and sewer. I've examples of that even in my district, and I'm sure my rural colleagues would as well. Or they may want to buy and put a lot of money into fixing it up.

**MS. ROGERS:** And where are the four that are pending sales?

**MR. JACKMAN:** All four of the units, actually, are in Labrador. One is on Low Road in Cartwright. That's currently subject to a tender as we speak, and the other three are in Port Hope Simpson.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes. Yeah, there's one –

**MS. DEMPSTER:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yeah. I think one of those units, I believe on Notley Drive, has been vacant in excess of 10 years. So a long, long time.

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Your time has expired.

I should also make note that we have Mr. Paul Lane joining us as well.

Mr. Lane, do you have any questions?

**MR. LANE:** I will a little a bit later.

**CHAIR:** Wait until the end?

**MR. LANE:** I thought this was supposed to be starting at 6, so I'm a little – I don't even know where we're to.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

We're on Newfoundland and Labrador Housing.

**MR. LANE:** Okay. Anyway, you can go ahead and if I got a couple questions after that –

**CHAIR:** Okay. We'll go back to you after.

Mr. Lester.

**MR. LESTER:** (Inaudible) program. The applications were due February 28. Can the Minister please tell us how many applications have been received? Could we be provided with a list of applicants, not copies of proposals just simply the names?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Sorry, I just needed clarity on what you were asking. I thought I knew the answer.

The call that we went out open to profit and non-profit. We had \$6 million that we were working with, and we had \$42 million in requests. I believe it was around 115 applications.

Those applications, when they come in, go through a whole process of being scored in-house again by an inner house working committee that got expertise in engineering and program delivery and things like that. They look at the technical aspect, the equity, need and demand in an area, what the current vacancy rate might be in an area. Then they're all scored on a sheet and Housing does the best job they can with allocating based on that.

**MR. LESTER:** Are there any plans to increase the budget if there are any funds available throughout the department?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** It's my understanding that whenever we have gone out with a call for affordable housing, whether it's private or non-profit, we've always had a tremendous uptake. We're a rapidly aging province and people want to get out of their houses and into those units.

As we work out the details of the bilateral agreements, I'm certain we will continue to build money into the budget so that we can continue to go out and have those calls in the future.

**OFFICIAL:** (Inaudible.)

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yeah. That's right, yeah.

It's also tied as a requirement to the National Housing Strategy.

**MR. LESTER:** Okay.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** They want all the provinces to continue doing this.

**MR. LESTER:** Yeah.

Is there any specific language or regulations as it pertains to community gardens on Housing properties?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I think it's very therapeutic.

**MR. LESTER:** Yeah.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I'm not aware. I'll look to my staff.

**OFFICIAL:** No, I –

**MR. LESTER:** That may be something we could consider. As you say, it's very therapeutic and it would provide people with fresh produce. In some cases they would probably not be able to afford it. It would encourage people to take more pride in their properties. Even if they are tenants of the Housing Corporation, it would still improve their whole aspect.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, and I can tell you in CSSD department, in our Healthy Living division, we have been funding and supporting quite a number of community gardens around the province, yeah.

**MR. LESTER:** Okay.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Which helps with food security and healthier living, yeah.

**MR. LESTER:** Actually, that's all the questions I have there now.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Thank you.

Yeah, go ahead.

**MS. ROGERS:** You had mentioned about the Froude Avenue fire that (inaudible) development. Just describe what you'll be doing there.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Froude Avenue, I'll let you speak to it, yes.

**MR. GOSS:** We're in the process of designing. I believe – you caught me off guard in terms of the numbers, but we're replacing the same number that –

**OFFICIAL:** (Inaudible.)

**MR. GOSS:** Eight came down or eight are going up.

**MS. ROGERS:** Eight came down.

**MR. GOSS:** Yeah. Eight came down, eight are going up. We're going to try to build it so that it fits the skyline. It's not going to – you know, that's the intent. And there will be accessibility requirements and visitability. All of them will at least be – have universal designs. So that's helpful also.

**MS. ROGERS:** Oh, good.

And will they be one, two-bedroom units, or –

**MR. JACKMAN:** They're all two-bedroom units.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay.

So will they be exactly the same style as the housing in Froude Avenue now, or –?

**MR. GOSS:** That was a debate we had in-house; but, yeah, it's going to be a similar style. I don't believe it's going to be just a block, two stories. There were some people who thought that might be a good idea and some people who didn't.

I can certainly get the details for you. I believe it's going to be similar in terms of structure but I don't believe it's going to be identical. I can certainly get that for you.

**MS. ROGERS:** Great. Thank you.

The units awaiting repair, 69 major, is there a plan to have those all repaired this year?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I think it's safe to say we wouldn't be able to do all of that in one year. Budget restraints would not allow because your money is all spread out so much for each of the different programs.

I will let Doug –

**MR. GOSS:** If I might just jump in – I'm sure Doug can add – I will say that some of those 69 major repair are in areas where there is also no demand.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay.

**MR. GOSS:** We're not going to fix them up if there isn't a demand. Depending on how long that continues, we may have to look at alternative uses for them.

We have other areas where the units are in good shape and there's simply no demand, yet they're available for rent. Some of the 69 – a goodly portion, as a matter of fact, some in Labrador West, some in the Burin and Marystown area

and some in the Corner Brook area – are major repair, but there is also no demand in the particular area.

**MS. ROGERS:** Would we be able to have a list of ...?

**MR. GOSS:** Sure.

**MS. ROGERS:** Great. Thank you.

**MR. GOSS:** A list of the major repair vacancies?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, and it's here anyway.

**MS. ROGERS:** I believe in the budget there was an indication that there are going to be two new social workers. Is it two new social work positions?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, shared between the five community centres.

**MS. ROGERS:** In St. John's?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay, great.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** We had gone down –

**MS. ROGERS:** There's certainly a need.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, maybe September – I have to look to my EA – it was early days we went down and sat with the executive directors. I was pretty impressed with the really valuable work they're doing. That was their ask at that time and we were happy to have been able to support that request.

**MS. ROGERS:** Great.

The funding to community organizations and the tenants organizations, Minister, you said that's changing in '18-'19, is it? There was an increase?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Funding to...?

**MS. ROGERS:** The community centres. Was there an increase in funding then for '18-'19?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** No, it's the additional support of the two social workers.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay. Thank you.

The additional 100 portable rent supplements, how will those be allocated and what areas will they be?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** We'll break it down into 50 and 50. Fifty will go to the wait-list, as those people come in and 50 will go to the existing –

**MS. HARDING:** Fifty will be for people who are currently living in situations and they put in for a transfer request.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay.

Are they specifically for seniors?

**MS. HARDING:** No.

**MS. ROGERS:** No? Okay, great.

Has that process unrolled yet? Has that started? Where are we with numbers now?

**MS. HARDING:** For the portable rent supplement program we're up to about 15 participants at this point in time. It's been started about three weeks so we're about 10 per cent of the way.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay, great. Thank you.

I have a lot of requests for that in my district, particularly with seniors looking for being able to stay – some of them to stay where they are because their spouse may have died.

That's great. Thank you.

I think I may be done here. Can we have a list of properties that were sold in '17-'18?

**MR. JACKMAN:** I can speak to that, actually, because I have that information in front of me.

During the fiscal year ended March 31, 2018, there were actually no social housing units sold. In terms of land – we call this merely more back land, very small pieces – we sold some rear land at 14 to 16 Spruce Avenue in Mount Pearl, it's

only 185 square metres; and on 26 Humber Valley Road, Corner Brook, 102 square metres. Those were the only two sales transactions we had with respect to land during the fiscal year-end of March 31, 2018.

**MS. ROGERS:** Yeah, I think there was more sold the previous year.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, in the fiscal year-end of March 31, 2017, there were quite a few sold. They were all in – I can't name off all the communities but they were all in rural areas of the province.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay. Thank you.

I just want to take a minute to say thank you very much. I know how wonderful the staff are at Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. The staff also does a lot of volunteer work and takes such pride in the work they do. I know how hard it is to be a landlord and how important the work that you're doing is for the people of the province, particularly people who are having such a hard time financially and needing a safe place to live.

Thank you to you. Thank you, also, to your staff who have done great work.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Mr. Lane, do you have anything?

**MR. LANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I thank my colleagues for leave to ask a few questions. I apologize for not getting here earlier. The schedule that was given to me was 6 p.m. but I believe some agreement was made to go 5:30 and I was not informed. Where I'm not officially on the committee I suppose that's how I was overlooked. Anyway, that's why I was late arriving.

Minister, I just have a couple of questions. First of all, I'm glad that with the rent supps it now goes with the person as opposed to the house. I think that's a really good move. I've had a number of situations with people where that would have benefitted them. I just say that I think that was a positive thing and I'm glad to see there are more rent supps.

It may have already been asked, I may have missed it, but how many rent supps were there and how many additional rent supps do we have now? Was it 100, I heard you say?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** \$2 million over 10 years.

**MR. LANE:** \$2 million for rent supps over 10 years?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MR. LANE:** What was it before? I understand there was an increase, right?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yeah, it's about 30 rent supps.

**MR. JACKMAN:** It's approximately 30 rent supps.

**MR. LANE:** Thirty additional people per year would get a rent supp? Is that what we're saying?

**MR. JACKMAN:** It's 30, I'll say, households for a 10-year period.

**MR. LANE:** Additional ones.

**MR. JACKMAN:** Yes, an additional 30.

**MR. LANE:** Okay and how many did we –

**MR. JACKMAN:** Not 300, I should say.

**MR. LANE:** No, roughly how many were there before the addition?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** In the 2017-18 rent supp budget: 1,790 rent supplements.

**MR. LANE:** 1,790.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MR. LANE:** We're going to go up to 1,820 then, or roughly.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** It was close to \$10,775,000 before that.

**MR. LANE:** Okay.



Those additional 30, is that on a first-come, first-served basis, or is it based on so many on the Avalon, so many in other parts of the province and some in Labrador? How does that work?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** It's across the province.

**MR. LANE:** It's across the province, but is it broken down into first-come, first-served? Or is it like so many for St. John's area, so many for ...?

**MS. HARDING:** We looked at the demand, did an analysis and broke it down geographically by need and demand, basically.

**MR. LANE:** Okay.

Still, if someone needed a rent supplement, they'd just go on a wait-list like they do now, but hopefully the wait-list would be a little bit faster because of the additional rent supps. Is that the idea?

**MS. HARDING:** Perhaps I should clarify that you actually don't go on a wait-list for a rent supplement; you apply to Housing for housing. Whatever best suits your need at the time, that's what you'll be offered. It could be one of our own units or it could be a rent supplement.

**MR. LANE:** Yeah, okay.

In terms of this program, Minister, I can't remember what it's called per se but the \$400,000, basically, for 10 units over 10 years, \$40,000 per unit if someone wanted to build housing.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Affordable housing.

**MR. LANE:** I know in Mount Pearl as an example, they built some units down at the bottom of Municipal Avenue. It was done by a private developer. They availed of the \$400,000 and the City of Mount Pearl actually gave them a piece of vacant land that had been there for a long time, so they made it even more attractive.

When it was done, the idea was that we need more affordable housing for seniors, in particular. A lot of seniors, certainly, in Mount Pearl have been there their whole lives. They don't want to leave Mount Pearl; they want to

stay in their community because of their friends, neighbours and programs.

The thought was that it would be affordable housing for them, but the reality of it under that program, of course, is that they knocked \$350 a month off the rent or whatever it is for 10 units. At the end of the day it was a case of: we would have charged you \$1,200, now you're getting it for \$900 or \$850 or whatever. That amount is still too high. What's really needed is more housing like we have up at Masonic Park as an example, where it's more affordable senior's housing. Maybe it's \$500 or \$600 a month, whatever the case might be.

This program, with these private developers, is really not filling the need of affordable senior's housing. It's fine if you're a senior and you've got a private pension and you have some money that you can afford to do this, but if you're someone on basic OAS and CPP, even with this program it's not what you would really call affordable subsidized housing the same as someone might get up at the Masonic Park.

With that as a backdrop I'm wondering, because I know co-op housing, CHANAL, had put in an application recently, I think it was for Maccarthy Crescent or it was somewhere in Power's Pond. They were turned down. They were told there were more applications than there was money available. Co-op housing is more of a charitable – I don't know if charitable is the word for it, but it's a non-profit organization and it's more about providing affordable housing as opposed to a private developer. Not to mention the fact co-op housing is an ongoing venture, it's not like 10 years and then after 10 years it goes away. Of course, under this program after 10 years the developer owns the property and then he or she can charge market rates.

They got turned down. By the same token, private developers – who are making a profit off this and get it at the end of the day, they own this property – are getting in ahead of them. It's a long preamble, I know, but my question is: Shouldn't there be or is there a policy that says under this pot of money, while it may be open for non-profit and for private individuals, if a non-profit comes along – and I don't care who had the application in first – and can demonstrate that we're going to maintain low rents

indefinitely, versus a private person saying I'm going to do this, I can qualify the program for 10 years, and even before then it's not as low a rent as a non-profit, then shouldn't they get it first because the need is about providing affordable housing to seniors?

I'm not sure the private developer really fits. It could lower the rent for some people but does it really deal with the senior citizen who is on a totally fixed income and can't afford even the reduced rent from the developer. That was a mouthful I know.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I'll make an attempt to respond. If I miss anything, then staff can jump in. I've only been in the portfolio nine months, but during that time since I've been here a couple of things: you go out with a budget; you only have a certain amount. When you go private you can build a lot more units. We already have a full understanding of the tremendous need for additional units in the province.

I, actually, myself was wondering as an individual – never mind being a minister – where are we getting the best value. What's the right thing to be doing? I've reached out and talked to a number of people that are living in these units. I think we have 64 partner-managed housing units here around the province as well. They may not be 100 per cent across the board, but the response I've been given many times is if I have Aunt Millie and Uncle Joe that moves in to my apartment and they are there 10 years, I'm not jacking their rent up double in 10 years. I've established a rapport, I have a relationship. You're out in rural parts.

There will always be individuals that are more passionate about one or the other. If you come from the private sector you may think private is better. If you come from – and there's no doubt it, we have a lot of non-profits that are doing some really valuable work because they not only provide a unit but sometimes there are wraparound services and supports to the individual in the unit as well.

**MR. LANE:** Yeah. Minister, I think there's a couple of issues here. First of all, if I'm a private developer – yeah, I might not jack up the rent on Uncle Joe and Aunt Nellie as you said, but at the

point and time in their life when, based on their age, they go and they do this, their next step in 10 year's time may be – in theory, a lot of them may not even be there the whole 10 years. They might be moved on into a nursing home or whatever, not everybody of course but when you're looking at the age.

Then of course the next person comes along, once that 10 years is up, it's not like I had them for 10 years. Do you know what I'm saying? That's one thing. I guess the crux of my question is around the fact that if we have this pot of money, and I know there's a limited pot of money, and you have a non-for-profit organization, I'll just use CHANAL as an example – it could be the Knights of Columbus, it could be the Masons.

The Masons could say we want to expand Masonic Park. They have lots of land there that they could do it if they chose to do so. They're keeping the rents lower than what a private developer, even under this program, is keeping it. Their housing is truly affordable, seniors housing.

I guess my point is or my question is: Should they not be given a priority to say someone who can demonstrate that we're going to have indefinite lower rents because we're non-profit, then they should get the money first. If there's anything left over and a private developer wants to do something and can make the rent a little bit lower than market, then fine, kick in after the fact, but whoever is going to provide the lowest rent should have the priority, I guess would be my point and maybe my question.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I'm going to let Heather, who deals with this everyday, respond this time.

**MR. LANE:** Yeah.

**MS. HARDING:** Just further to your comment about the rental rates. They are actually set by CMHC. So the developer doesn't determine what they're going to charge. CMHC sets that rate and they're not able to go above it.

If you want to compare the non-profit versus the private, we had a proposal call in 2016 for \$6.125 million that went strictly non-profit and we were able to develop 45 units. In the \$6

million one, where there's actually a mix between non-profit and private, we should get almost 100 units. There's that balance as well.

Also, with the affordable housing there are income restrictions. So these private developers have to respond to people under a certain income limit as well.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

The time has expired.

Are there any other questions?

Ms. Rogers, do you have anything else?

**MS. ROGERS:** (Inaudible.)

**CHAIR:** Okay.

So since there are no further questions, I now ask the Clerk to recall 1.1.01.

**CLERK (Murphy):** 1.1.01.

**CHAIR:** Shall 1.1.01 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

On motion, subhead 1.1.01 carried.

**CLERK:** Total.

**CHAIR:** Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, total heads, carried.

**CHAIR:** Mr. Lane, I just wanted to clarify the Estimates times. Every day, other than Wednesdays, it's 6 p.m., but on Wednesdays it's 5:30 p.m.

**MR. LANE:** Okay.

**CHAIR:** Yeah.

**MR. LANE:** My colleague informed me of that.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

**MR. LANE:** But nobody officially informed me until today, and that's why I didn't know.

Anyway, thank you.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I want to thank you guys very much.

So we'll just go now and get the Housing staff. We'll just be one moment.

**Recess**

**CHAIR:** Good evening everyone. Thank you all for coming.

We are here this evening, of course, for the review of the Estimates of the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development. We've already used some time this evening from the three hours that was allotted for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, so we have until 8:30 p.m. to get the review done.

I now ask the Committee to introduce themselves.

**MS. PERRY:** Good evening, Madam Chair.

Tracey Perry, MHA for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

**MS. DRODGE:** Megan Drodge, Researcher with the Official Opposition caucus.

**MR. REID:** Scott Reid, St. George's - Humber.

**MS. ROGERS:** Gerry Rogers, St. John's Centre.

**MS. WILLIAMS:** Susan Williams, Researcher for the NDP.

**MR. LANE:** Paul Lane, MHA, Mount Pearl - Southlands.

**MR. WARR:** Brian Warr, MHA, Baie Verte - Green Bay.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Minister Dempster, if you would like to give a few opening remarks and introduce your officials. We have 15 minutes to do that and then we go back to the responder for 15 minutes. Then we'll go 10, 10 and 10 starting with 1.1.01. We'll just go on down and call all of them at the end.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'll ask the staff to introduce themselves and then I'll provide a few opening remarks.

**MS. BALLARD:** Donna Ballard, Deputy Minister.

**MR. KHURANA:** Harman Khurana, ADM.

**MR. FRENCH:** Steve French, Manager of Budgeting.

**MS. WALSH:** Susan Walsh, ADM.

**MR. HEALEY:** Rick Healey, ADM.

**MS. HEALEY:** Michelle Healey, Director of Healthy Living, Sport and Recreation.

**MR. BENNETT:** Derek Bennett, MHA, Lewisporte - Twillingate and parliamentary secretary.

**MS. TRICKETT:** Wanda Trickett, Departmental Controller.

**MS. ENGLISH:** Dana English, Executive Assistant to the minister.

**MS. COLMAN-SADD:** Vanessa Colman-Sadd, Director of Communications.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** We have a fantastic team in CSSD. We often deal with very heavy things in that social department: children and youth in care. I often say sport is the nice outlet. We get to do nice fun things in sports.

I'll just share a few opening remarks about the department. I want to thank everyone for taking the time on a beautiful evening to spend with us here going through the Estimates, which is a very important process. Our department is dedicated to providing a wide range of family-focused services with a concentration on nurturing strong, healthy communities. The services that we provide include everything from protecting children and youth from maltreatment and reuniting children with their families when appropriate, to helping alleviate poverty and ensuring that all residents are provided the opportunity to participate in society and economy.

Since becoming the minister, I have had the opportunity to visit a number of our offices across the province and visit with staff. This has been extremely invaluable to me as it's provided a real insight into what our staff are doing each and every day as they carry out that important work.

Every day we're in the boardroom discussing programs and policies on what's happening, but that was no substitute, whether it was in an office in Gander, Grand Falls, Deer Lake or Corner Brook, or whether it was in Sheshatshiu or attending the gathering at Gull Island or Goose Bay, or going into Natuashish for four hours and getting out on the third day later. It's all been really, really valuable experiences for me as minister. I don't think I need to share with folks here that the safety, protection and well-being of children and youth is paramount in this department and for this government.

Advancements made in child protection will help ensure children and youth are receiving the best services possible. Our priority is to work with families with an end goal of having children and youth return to their home. I think there are lots of things here that go without saying. I know all of you will agree that every

child and youth deserve a loving, nurturing environment. Generally, the number one best place for the child is with their family. Every day I think we have around 350 social workers around the province that work hard to achieve these outcomes.

In last year's budget we had funding to put in place a new Structured Decision-Making Model. That model was recently put in place. We are continuing the ongoing work of building a revitalized child protection system that is responsive to the priority needs of our children and youth, as well as continuing to make significant progress in creating a culture of accountability, excellence and consistency across all of our programs in all regions.

To help us achieve this we have also put in place a new ISM system, Integrated Service Management System, which is specifically designed to support child protection work and will help social workers manage their work and complete documentation. When myself and Susan, in particular, have gone around the province – and you mentioned things like you're going to now only need to do a one-page risk assessment and you're going to have these extra supports – they were pretty pleased to hear that. Some of the key features include due dates for program forms and notifications when documentation is overdue. It also improves access to data needed to monitor whether the programs and services are being delivered according to standard.

When children in care are unable to return safely to their parents, those children then require what we call a permanency plan. That plan may include adoption. In *Budget 2018* we will be allocating \$395,000 over the next two years to provide dedicated resources to develop profiles for children and youth who are waiting to be profiled for adoption and to complete that matching process. As I'm sure you'll appreciate, the social workers that we do have are very, very busy every day. We will be hiring three additional social workers to profile – I think it's a goal of – 120 who are waiting for adoption. Hopefully we'll see success from that.

We want to ensure we match children who are eligible for adoption with loving and supportive families and prevent children and youth from

aging out of care without a permanent connection to family or other supports. The first week I was in the department we had siblings, with the oldest one being 17, almost about to age-out. They got adopted. Those are the things that we celebrate every day. Things that our children sometimes take for granted, being in a loving home.

I also want to touch on a notable change we made recently. Last December we made amendments to the child and youth act which provides the legislative authority for the reporting of critical injuries and child deaths to the Advocate's office, which will enable the office to complete the work it is mandated to do. Tracey would be familiar with this. The Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune was involved and put forth amendments that were accepted. That process has started and those critical injuries, along with deaths, are being reported on a regular basis to the Advocate. We worked closely with the Advocate to develop both the legislative amendments and policy direction to ensure the Advocate's role in the protection of children and youth is fully supported.

I'd be remiss probably if I didn't mention that we are concerned about the shortage of social workers in Northern remote communities in Labrador. We have worked with the Human Resource Secretariat, representatives from the Nunatsiavut Government and Innu Nation to support recruitment and retention in these communities. Further, we are working with the school of social work to promote social work student placements in Labrador and recruitment of graduates. I'll just leave that where it is with my opening comments, but as we get into questioning later, if you have more questions on that piece, I'll be happy to answer them.

Physical activity is such an important part of our daily lives. Improving the health and well-being of the people of this province is a large component of this commitment. As laid out in *The Way Forward*, we have established targets to increase physical activity rates and breastfeeding rates, and reduce the smoking rates in our province. In Budget '18 we committed approximately \$6 million for sport, physical activity and recreation initiatives. We have also committed funding for healthy living initiatives such as smoking cessation and Carrot Rewards,

including \$1.3 million toward healthy eating supporting groups such as Kids Eat Smart, Food First NL and the School Lunch Association.

No surprise maybe to anyone here, I'm pretty excited about the fact that we committed \$500,000 for the Labrador Winter Games that I've been attending for, I think it's the 35th year coming up in 2019. They take place every three years in Labrador. I suppose I could also add that I've been an athlete at those games. I wouldn't do much with that right now, but I have some great memories from the games.

Our government continues to work with the community – of persons with disabilities and all residents – to move forward on our commitment to become a more inclusive province. We know citizens of our province still experience barriers on a daily basis; barriers that exclude people from taking part in their communities, from employment opportunities or maybe, sadly, sometimes even from accessing public services. We maintain our commitment to review existing legislation in order to remove barriers and ensure residents have equitable access to opportunities and to services.

We are investing \$400,000 for accessible vehicles to increase options for accessible transportation through either accessible taxi, or retrofitting or acquiring accessible vehicles for personal use; and \$75,000 for inclusion grants to non-profit community organizations. This will help those organizations make their facilities and events more accessible and inclusive. *Budget 2018* also supports the continued development of age-friendly communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador with an investment of \$300,000 for age-friendly transportation projects to support community-based transportation projects that demonstrate clear evidence of volunteer involvement and collaboration.

I might be remiss if I didn't mention that I had a chance to visit the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay's district in January. They're doing some fantastic work around the age-friendly community out in the Springdale area. I'm sure that other areas around the province will come on board more and more as they look at the great work happening there and in places like Clarendville.

This is in addition to our government announcing the first ever Seniors' Advocate for the province. Last year, we were pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Suzanne Brake to this role. I'll just make three quick comments about the Advocate and the role of the Advocate: Identify, review and analyze systemic issues – I think sometimes that gets confused in the public, they might think it's a place to go and take your individual complaints, maybe – working collaboratively with seniors, organizations, service delivery groups and others to identify and address systemic issues; and make recommendations to government respecting changes to improve services to and for seniors.

I've just barely touched the surface in the really large social department. They were just a few items that I wanted to highlight. I'll conclude by saying I am pleased every single day to work with a fantastic team. We remain committed to providing the necessary social supports to the people of our province.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister.

I just want to remind the speakers, before you speak, identify yourselves by stating your name just so that the Broadcast Centre can pick it up and it can be transcribed by Hansard.

Ms. Perry.

**MS. PERRY:** Thank you.

Thank you, Minister.

I'm going to start under section 1.1.01. I just have three general questions first. How many employees in positions are in the department currently?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Permanent positions in the department right now: the total would be 694.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

Minister, as well, can we get a copy of your binder or the Estimates?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay, thank you.

How many temporary staff would you have?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Thirty-six.

**MS. PERRY:** Thirty-six temp? Okay.

What is the vacancy rate in your department?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** The vacancy rate: permanent right now, we have a total of 98; and temporary, 9.

**MS. PERRY:** Nine? Okay.

How many positions are being eliminated this year due to attrition?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** There are no positions.

**MS. PERRY:** None?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** No.

I'm looking to staff to make sure the information – I think I'm right but there are none, right?

**MR. KHURANA:** None identified yet. We do have attrition savings but we don't have any positions for the year for elimination at this moment. We'll be working with HRS and Treasury Board, if required, to identify any positions.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

What percentage of your budget is attrition savings?

**MR. KHURANA:** Less than half a per cent. Roughly \$236,000 is the target for this year that we are hoping to achieve.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

Last year, in Transportation and Communications – moving on now to 1.1.01 – that budget was over by \$20,000. Can you explain what the variance was there?

1.1.01.01, under Salaries, then Transportation and Communications.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Can you clarify which one you're asking about there, Tracey?

**MS. PERRY:** Okay, it's on page 13.3 on the very, very bottom. It's under Executive and Support Services, 1.1.01, Minister's Office.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. PERRY:** Then, right under that, Salaries and then Operating Accounts.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. PERRY:** Transportation and Communications going across, you had budgeted \$45,800 but you spent \$65,000 so ...

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Okay.

Due to the ministerial shuffle that occurred on the 31st of July, it resulted in higher-than-anticipated travel costs. My predecessor, maybe he lived a couple of hours car drive away and I have a hike to Labrador. That was the difference there.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

That would also explain then, the increase for this year would be Labrador travel?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

Last year, Salaries went over budget by \$518,000 – oh, sorry, 1.2.01, under Salaries for Executive Support. Last year you had budgeted \$1.67 million but you actually spent \$2,188,400. It went over budget by \$518,000, yet this year your budget is forecasted to be lower even than it was for last year. Can you outline what's happening here with this line?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yeah, I can give you a little explanation.

That was mainly due to a couple of things. The budget for the manager of Service Delivery and Regional Operations position was transferred from Child and Youth Services activity to Executive Support to correctly align the position within the organization chart. There was no impact in that part; there was just some realigning to the departmental budget or to the individual holding the position.

I also want to add that we had some paid leave payouts and severance for three staff, two DMs, two ADMs and the director of Communications. You wouldn't normally budget for those things – correct me –

**MS. PERRY:** Yes.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** – because you don't really know when people are leaving or if it's one-time paid.

**MS. PERRY:** Right. Have these positions since been filled again?

**MR. KHURANA:** These were part of the management restructuring when the two departments were combined, so these were redundant positions.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

**MR. KHURANA:** When the positions left, we had to have large lump sum payments for paid leave and severance which wouldn't have been budgeted.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

Moving on to 1.2.02, last year Salaries were over budget by \$167,000 and this year's budget is increased to \$5.464 million. Can you explain that line item?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Where is that, Harman?

**MR. KHURANA:** Tab 4 (inaudible).

**MS. PERRY:** 1.2.02, Salaries.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** The increase in expenditure was primarily due to unbudgeted continuance payments as a result of the '16-'17 restructuring, as well as severance and paid annual leave payouts that occurred during the year. Very similar to what we just explained in the other area.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

The next line item, Transportation and Communications; can you explain why there was a savings of almost \$5,000 in 2017-18, but

the budget for next year is being increased – or this year?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** The \$4,800?

**MS. PERRY:** No, the \$264,500. Actually, you were under budget last year. There was a savings of \$5,000 but this year you're budgeting \$334,700.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, the difference of \$4,800, right?

**MS. PERRY:** Yeah, sorry.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Basically savings were achieved from various travel requirements that either did not occur or when they travelled they had lower-than-estimated cost.

**MS. PERRY:** That's how the \$5,000 was saved, so why is this year's budget \$70,000 higher? It went from \$264,000 to \$334,000.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** As a part of the zero-based budgeting exercise, the department adjusted its budgetary requirements to address funding requirements throughout the activity through reallocation from other divisions. Once again, there was no net change in the departmental budget as the reallocation came in from other areas.

**MS. PERRY:** Right, it's just restructuring within.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes. Some things were taken from Susan's shop and put in Rick's shop and things like that.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

It looks like there were some savings last year with respect to Supplies. The amount budgeted this year is for \$22,000 less. Can you explain why that is happening?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Other than the fact there was a reduction of discretionary spending. That resulted in less-than-anticipated supplies expenditure during the year.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.



**MS. DEMPSTER:** I could tell you that they have me buying my own scribblers and pencils.

**MS. PERRY:** Under Purchased Services – still with line 1.2.02 – the restated 2017-18 budget doesn't match what was in last year's Estimates book. Last year, the book said that the budget would be \$117,000, but in this document it's listed as \$55,700. Can you explain why the number is different than what was presented in last year's budget document?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Purchased Services generally includes transportation costs, equipment leases, photocopiers and training provided by external groups. The revised budget is higher than anticipated due to overages; for example, photocopier charges and costs associated with records management.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** That's where it was from.

Harman will add to that.

**MR. KHURANA:** There was some budget for leases. Leases were restructured; all the money for leases has been moved to TW. That's why it's not matching up with the Estimates that you would have seen previously.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

Under the Revenue - Provincial, I believe this revenue is from three pools that your department operates. Is that correct, the source of your revenue?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** The revenue is received from the three provincial pools, training centres – there's one in Gander, one in Corner Brook and one in Happy Valley – for things like swimming lesson registration, swim passes and pool rentals.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

Last year, we talked about funding, \$20,000 for the development of School Food Guidelines. Can you give us an update on where that is?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Can you repeat the question again, please?

**MS. PERRY:** Last year, there was \$20,000 budgeted for the development of School Food Guidelines. Can you give us a status update as to where these guidelines are?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I'm just going to look to Michelle to answer that.

**MS. HEALEY:** In relation to the School Food Guidelines, that work was actually deferred. In 2018 Health Canada is revising Canada's Food Guide, so the work was deferred to ensure that new School Food Guidelines line up with revisions to Canada's Food Guide.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

We also talked last year about funding of \$20,000 for the Atlantic Collaborative on Injury Prevention. Can you give us an update on that?

**MS. HEALEY:** That funding is a partnership between the four Atlantic provinces. That funding was paid out in '17-'18 and is intended for '18-'19 as well.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay, so the four provinces. Which province administers it?

**MS. HEALEY:** The centre is located in Halifax but all four Atlantic provinces participate.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

1.2.03; in 2017-18 the budget for Salaries was decreased and you found more savings, but in this year's budget you're allocating \$1,394,200 more than you budgeted last year. Can you explain that variance?

1.2.03.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** In 2018-19, the salary plan now includes the additional behaviour management specialist. They would have formerly reported to the Child and Youth Services activity. These positions now report to the children and youth division. That totals \$1,232,300.

In addition to that, as I alluded to in my opening comments, \$161,900 has been added to the budget as part of an approved budget note on the permanency planning of children and youth in

care. We're going to have these three positions added to the department, the \$161,900.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

Can you give an overview – under Transportation and Communications, still with 1.2.03 – of where savings were achieved in '17-'18 and what the reason is for the increase in budget '18-'19?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** The revised budget, down by \$10,000, is a reduction of discretionary spending resulting in less-than-anticipated travel expenditures.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

Under Purchased Services – still with 1.2.03 – last year this line item had a savings of \$59,200. Can you tell us how that was achieved and what is planned for this year to total \$121,500 in spending?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** The reduction, once again, is lower-than-anticipated expenditures during the year as savings were used to help offset cost for the Structured Decision-Making – structured decision-management training that I referred to in my opening.

What was your next comment? What will the money be used for?

**MS. PERRY:** Yes.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Where will it be spent, Purchased Services?

**MS. PERRY:** What is planned for the \$121,000?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Basically, that money goes to advertising, meeting room rentals, printing and other general services. I don't know if I'm missing anything there.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Ms. Rogers.

**MS. ROGERS:** If we could go back to 1.2.02. Under Salaries we see an increase there of \$1.3 million for '18-'19.

**CHAIR:** Once again, if you could identify yourself before speaking, the Broadcast Centre is having difficulty.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Thank you. It's Minister Dempster.

Why is the original budget up, the \$1.3 million?

**MS. ROGERS:** Yeah, the \$1.3 million in the Salaries there.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** The increase is primarily due to the positions in the child and youth services branch; for example, financial administration officers, account clerk, IT and clerk typist IIIs. They have been moved. It's just some in-house things happening again.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** They were moved into Corporate Services and performance management. No net change as a result of this in the departmental budget as, basically, this was just a reallocation of salary, budget and positions from one branch to another. Staff was not impacted due to the change in reporting structure.

There is, I'll mention, a \$101,600 increase mainly due to year-over-year changes; for example, prior vacant positions becoming filled. It might have been an incremental step increase or something like that.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay. Thank you.

Then down to 1.2.03, under Professional Services – 1.2.03, under Program and Policy there.

Under Professional Services can you just explain a bit what kinds of professional services would be contracted? Then we see a drop in \$156,000 for this year.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** There were lower-than-anticipated expenditures during the year. Those

savings were used to help offset the cost of that Structure Decision-Making training.

The actual expenditures to date for Professional Services include the implementation of that Structured Decision-Making Model.

What was the other part of your question, Gerry? I'm sorry.

**MS. ROGERS:** We see a decrease there, so I assume then that there was a lot more activity around the structured management.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay and that has been implemented now?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. ROGERS:** How is it going?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Like any new program there were some little tweaks to work out, but the feedback generally has been very, very positive for the staff right across the region.

**MS. ROGERS:** Great.

Has all the training been done now?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Only new staff have not yet had the training.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay, great.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** There's been a tremendous amount of work happening around that system over the last number – well, all winter really.

**MS. ROGERS:** Yeah and it seems to be something that the staff likes and it's helping them with their work.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I'm going to just ask Susan to speak to the model for a moment.

**MS. WALSH:** I'll certainly speak to the staff's experience and I'll probably hand it over to my colleague here for the model. From the staff experience perspective they are very excited. It's a wonderful model. All we're receiving is very positive feedback about the tools and the

opportunity to have a more up-to-date approach. We had our old model for so long.

As the minister indicated, absolutely there have been some challenges, like any new model, in trying to appreciate if they are following it appropriately. We've had some sessions with the staff; two sessions to this point. The third one – I just reached out to all of the zone managers to say: What would you find most helpful in terms of your continued learning and support around this? They said they'd like a question and answer period and they'd like to present some non-identifying cases and get some feedback. We're organizing that now.

**MS. ROGERS:** Susan, it's mostly then, social workers working in child protection who are using this?

**MS. WALSH:** That's correct.

**MS. ROGERS:** Recording and report writing has always been such a challenge. It's so good.

Great, thank you.

In 2.1.01 we see a variance in the Salaries for '17-'18 and then '18-'19. It's Child and Youth Services.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. ROGERS:** Yes.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** So 99 per cent of the 2017-18 original budget salaries in Child and Youth Services were spent during the year.

Salaries are lower than anticipated, primarily, due to vacancies that occurred throughout the year, delays in filling positions, due partially to hard to fill. In this case, we would be referring, primarily or especially, to Labrador, and turnover in staff and throughout the year, for example, people going on maternity leave, things like that.

**MS. ROGERS:** So then we see also a decrease of \$3 million for '18-'19.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yeah.

The 2018-19 salary plan is reduced by \$2.4325 million due to the staff, for example, – and I think I might have shared this with Tracey – financial systems officers, accounting clerks, typist IIIs and behavioural management specialists. It's just where the salaries were moved to other divisions within the department and there was no net change at all to the departmental budget.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** It was an allocation, basically, from one branch to the other.

Further to that, two more quick points; \$353,300 has been removed from the budget due to budget decisions for the departmental attrition plan, but no layoffs will occur due to this reduction in salary budget. Finally, \$333,000 remaining reduction is primarily due to prior-year decisions including management restructuring.

**MS. ROGERS:** So we'll lose some positions through attrition there then?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MR. KHURANA:** There are no positions identified, as I mentioned. This is something we want to achieve through attrition. So over the next few months we'll be working with HRS and Treasury Board to come up with a plan. We still have to review what retirements are upcoming. We may be able to manage this in the short term through vacancies.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay.

**MR. KHURANA:** So we may not have to identify positions immediately, if there are enough vacancies. We might have to wait out if there are any retirements that take place over the course of the next couple of years.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay. Thank you.

Transportation and Communications, we see an increase of \$325,000 in '17-'18, and then a decrease of \$82,000?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Transportation and Communications, so we know that includes the cost of staff travel, postage, telephones,

cellphones and a significant number of staff in this department and CSSD are required to travel as a part of their daily work.

**MS. ROGERS:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Travel-related costs are the major expenditure for this activity. The variance that you see here in the budget is primarily due to the additional expenditures of regional staff travelling throughout the province for the new structure decision-making model, as a part of their training.

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you.

I imagine, too, if you're replacing people constantly in Labrador, there would be some travel there as well.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** There's a cost to that.

**MS. ROGERS:** Yeah.

Okay, thank you.

If we can scroll down to Purchased Services. What kinds of services would be purchased under this? I see there's a variance there.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** What kinds of – well, are you talking about where the budget is up to \$75,400?

**MS. ROGERS:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, just to make sure I was in the right place.

So, the expenditures were due primarily to higher than anticipated costs in photo copying, vehicle maintenance and leases.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay, thank you.

Allowances and Assistance, so we see an increase of \$10.8 million and then a decrease of \$213,000, if we could just look at that.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** So the increased cost is directly attributable to the growth in the number of level 4 placements as a result of an increase in the number of children with complex needs requiring care.

**MS. ROGERS:** Why is that do you think?

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

**MS. ROGERS:** Can we just finish this one?

**CHAIR:** Your time is expire

**MS. ROGERS:** Can we just finish this question?

**CHAIR:** Okay sure, go ahead.

**MS. ROGERS:** Yeah.

Why is that do you think? It seems like a significant jump in the placement of level 4 care.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** We have been seeing an increase in level 4, and it is the more costly placement option.

I guess, when we look at society in general and we look at things like an increase in mental health, addictions, lots of complex things, we're seeing larger sibling groups that we can't place into foster care. So if you have three or four – I don't know what I'm missing here.

**OFFICIAL:** (Inaudible.)

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yeah, it's pretty much.

**MS. ROGERS:** It's a big jump, isn't it?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, it's very concerning.

I will say, this is something we discuss every single day in the department. The increase in level 4 concerns us all. When we look at the bigger picture, and long before I was here, we all knew the stories around the province of the huge numbers of children that were out of province. So we've been able to bring that down significantly.

**MS. ROGERS:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** It was over 50 and now, I believe, it's only around 14 out of province.

You'll remember the sad stories from years ago of children in hotel rooms. We no longer have that. That's not happening.

Over the last number of months, since I've come to the department, we've put together an interdepartmental group that's looking really hard at this issue. So now when there's a need to take children from homes or place them, it's looked at heavily by the whole group: What are the options?

There's been no new level 4 since January, correct? Yes, since we've put this committee in place.

**MS. ROGERS:** So then for '18-'19, you're going back to the '17-'18 numbers. So you expect for it to be dropped by that much, \$10.8 million?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** The answer's coming.

All right, I'll let Harman speak to that.

**CHAIR:** Mr. Healey?

**MR. HEALEY:** So what we've put in place is we've put in a much more comprehensive analysis of available placement options any time a child is deemed in need of a staff residential placement. We've also put in an oversight committee looking at all our level 4 placements.

So we're looking at our vacancy rates and our usage rates, not only in individualized living arrangements but also in our group homes and our emergency placement units.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Ms. Perry?

**MS. PERRY:** Over the last two years we've spoke about a new anti-smoking campaign in Estimates.

Can you give us some information on what the campaign entails and tell us about how it's progressing?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I'll start, and if I miss anything I'll look to Michelle, our expert in the Healthy Living Division.

So we've set some targets, as a part of *The Way Forward*, to reduce our smoking rates by 4 per cent by 2025, and as a part of that we are

supporting a number of groups like annual funding going to the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco, the NL Lung Association and funding to the Helping Women Quit program.

I'm going to let Michelle speak to maybe the measuring part of that, which is more difficult to do.

Michelle.

**CHAIR:** Ms. Healey.

**MS. HEALEY:** I think some more statistics will be available in 2018, as in terms of where we're working towards the target that has been established, but to build on the campaign as well. We're working with the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco on a youth prevention initiative, which is a targeted campaign to prevent youth from the uptake of smoking which will certainly help us with reducing smoking rates overall. That work is currently underway with the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay. Thank you.

Last year in Estimates the minister spoke about the development of an individualized support funding model. Can you provide an update on this?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Too many notes here, Tracey.

**MS. PERRY:** Minister, can we get a copy of your notes as well?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, certainly you can get a copy. I'm just looking for my individualized funding model. I know that we have started that process. I don't see that right in front of me so I'm going to ask: Donna, do you want to speak to that?

**MS. BALLARD:** No, I'll look to Rick on that one. He's lead in that.

**MR. HEALEY:** We're really excited about the individualized funding, of course. How we're developing this is that we're working with the community itself. We're actually with the community and users of the system, so we have put together a cohort of users.

With the users and the community at the table, we're actually developing what this individualized funding will look like in the future. It's a true co-design of a program and it's going really well. I don't know how often we've done that in the past, but it's a real unique way of designing a program. Right now, we have a cohort of individuals who are actually utilizing an individualized funding model within community supports.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay. Thank you.

Last year in Estimates the deputy minister talked about the purchase of some data regarding poverty levels. I'm wondering if we can get an update on this. How is the project and analysis going? What was learned from it? What actions are being taken?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Poverty levels?

**MS. PERRY:** Poverty levels, yeah.

**CHAIR:** Mr. Healey.

**MR. HEALEY:** We're always purchasing new data and looking at it. I don't recall, to be honest with you, that specific purchase you're referring to, but I certainly can get back to you on it.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay. Thank you so much, Mr. Healey.

Last year, it was indicated that you were going to be doing more by distance delivery. How has this impacted the services available to children and families?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Distance delivery? Can you be a little bit more specific on what type of –?

**MS. PERRY:** In child, youth and family services.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I'm looking to staff because I wasn't here. I'm not familiar with anything in the distance delivery type of service that we're doing. We've been here over nine months. No –

**MS. PERRY:** You can get back to us on that one.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Our ADM responsible for children and youth says it's not ringing any bells to her. She's not familiar.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay. I'm going to bypass the next one or two.

Under Grants and Subsidies, where does this money go? Can we get a detailed list and a breakdown of who the grants were allocated to, where privacy permits? How come this went over budget by \$1,389,000 in the previous fiscal year? We're thinking this is funding for Key Assets, Waypoints, Shalom, Blue Sky and John Howard.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Can you tell me where you are in the line by line?

**MS. PERRY:** Yeah, Grants and Subsidies, 2.1.01.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** 2.1?

**MS. PERRY:** 2.1.01.10, yeah. Page 13.5, just above Amount to be Voted.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Right here, yeah.

That increase was mainly related to annualization of cost associated with the additional emergency placement homes that were established in the previous year.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

Would we be able to get a detailed breakdown of the funding allocations there?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I don't know what the privacy is around that.

Harman, if you could ...?

**MR. KHURANA:** Could you clarify what details you were looking for?

**MS. PERRY:** Who was awarded the grants and subsidies and how much for each recipient?

**MR. KHURANA:** It's all service providers. There wasn't one specific one. We have about roughly 30-odd homes.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

**MR. KHURANA:** They'd be Blue Sky, Key Assets, Shalom and Waypoint. This particular one will be one that was created in 2016. It probably was created in the middle of the year and now in 2017 we had to pay the full-year cost. That's why there was a bit of a shortfall.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

Under revenue – and still on the same section – the restated 2017-2018 budget doesn't match what was in last year's Estimate book. Last year, the book said that forecasted revenue was \$15,544,000, but it's listed here as \$15,377,100.

Can you explain why? That would be under the revenue.

**MR. KHURANA:** Are you referring to the federal revenues?

**MS. PERRY:** 2.1.01, Revenue - Federal, yes.

**MR. KHURANA:** You're indicating that last year's Estimates were not reconciling with the \$15.5 million?

**MS. PERRY:** Yeah, in last year's budget document that was presented the amount was stated as \$15,544,000, but it's showing up this year as \$15,377,000. It's not matching last year's budget document. I think that pertains to things like Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Children's Special Allowance and Youth Justice Agreement.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** If I'm looking at the right place, the revenue received during 2017-18 was higher than anticipated mainly due to additional revenue received for Children's Special Allowance; so there was \$3.2 million. INAC, Indigenous and Northern Affairs, was \$0.2 million, am I ...?

**MR. KHURANA:** I have the Estimates from last year. For 17-18 the budget was \$15.544 million for revenues and that's what's here.

**MS. PERRY:** We are showing \$15,377,100, and this is last year's?

**MR. KHURANA:** We'll have to get back to you on that. I'm not sure what the reason is.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Ms. Rogers.

**MS. ROGERS:** Can we go to 3.1.01, under Seniors and Social Development, Healthy Living, Grants and Subsidies. Can we have a list of the Grants and Subsidies that were allocated under that, 10?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, we can.

**MS. ROGERS:** Great. Thank you.

Also, we see an increase in '18-'19 Estimates of \$655,000. Are there any new programs or just a nice fat, juicy -?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** The increases are due to four reasons: \$500,000 for the Labrador Winter Games and that happens only every three years; a \$250,000 increase for healthy living and youth wellness; \$75,000 was a decrease for NL games regional qualifier; and there was a \$20,000 decrease for Canada Games programs, cycling. I guess we had no one that went in cycling after maybe?

**MS. HEALEY:** Correct. We didn't cycle.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yeah.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay. Thank you.

Just to go back to the smoking cessation and smoking programs, are we seeing an increase in the number of youth taking up smoking?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Michelle.

**MS. HEALEY:** We're waiting on some additional stats to come out in the fall of 2018 that should give us some additional data around youth uptake. There's actually a school survey that will take place in the 2018 school year that will give us some additional data around youth smoking rates right across the country and in our province.

**MS. ROGERS:** Oh, great.

The data will cover what time period?

**MS. HEALEY:** It's an annual survey.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay, great.

Do you have a gut sense as to what's happening?

**MS. HEALEY:** Anecdotally, with the introduction of e-cigarettes, that provides a gateway sometimes to tobacco. That's why some of the work that we're doing with the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco around youth prevention initiatives is really a key to try and prevent youth from ever starting to smoke.

**MS. ROGERS:** Is there a gender split as well, in terms of the data that you'll receive?

**MS. HEALEY:** I currently don't have the information here with me but we could provide what's available to you.

**MS. ROGERS:** Great. Thank you very much.

I'd like to skip over to 3.1.06, the Disability Policy Office. In the Grants and Subsidies we see a reduction there of \$75,000.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** You're looking for a breakdown?

**MS. ROGERS:** Yeah, it's a small - I just see that there's such a need in the province and that we see a reduction in Grants and Subsidies under 3.1.06.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Okay, so the reduction in the budget is due to a prior year forecast adjustment for combining and reducing capacity and inclusion grants.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay. Thank you.

I have some general questions. The Poverty Reduction Strategy; what activities did the strategy undertake in '17-'18? Also, what's planned for '18-'19?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** In *Budget 2018* we did have over \$280 million being invested in poverty reduction. That's up from \$270 million in 2017.



I can say that government is taking a long-term and holistic approach, so looking right across departments. We're certainly committed to doing what we can to reduce poverty and undertaking work in line with *The Way Forward*. That includes a health-in-all-policies approach.

When we think about poverty reduction, we look to things like the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes and the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. All of that helps feed into information that we need as we plan going forward focusing on homelessness, educational outcomes, mental health and addiction.

Some of the initiatives right now in the department that are under development is: Supporting social enterprise; supporting initiatives that focus on private sector job creation and economic growth; implementing the individualized funding model for persons with disabilities; multi-year community grants approach which we announced today, this morning, the Premier and I; working with the federal government as it develops a Canadian poverty reduction strategy; and moving to a more integrated client- and outcome-focused approach to service delivery.

**MS. ROGERS:** Basically, it's \$280 million that's kind of sprinkled throughout.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Across departments.

**MS. ROGERS:** Yes.

Is it possible to have a list to identify where that \$280 million is?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** We have a full list of all the initiatives that total up to that amount.

**MS. ROGERS:** Great.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I think there's no issue with sharing, is there?

**OFFICIAL:** I wouldn't think so.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay, great.

Also, just to reiterate that what we each ask for that we'll both receive?

Great, thank you very much.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** We were taught share and share alike in kindergarten.

**MS. ROGERS:** That's great.

Also, the Support to Community Agencies under 3.1.03, can we have a list of the support to the different agencies?

**OFFICIAL:** Where's that?

**MS. ROGERS:** 3.1.03, Support to Community Agencies.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** There are about 40 community groups. We could provide you with that list.

**MS. ROGERS:** You can give us that list? Great, thank you very much.

This is jumping around a little bit but I have a question –

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Just to finish up, I want to mention in looking at the Support to Community Agencies you're going to see the \$25,000 increase. That was \$25,000 that we gave to School Lunch.

**MS. ROGERS:** Great. Thank you.

How many foster homes are there currently in the province? Do we know?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** I'm going to ask Susan.

**MS. WALSH:** There are 475 regular foster homes and 275 relative/significant other foster homes.

**MS. ROGERS:** Where is that in relation to a year ago?

**MS. WALSH:** That I can't answer. Were you going to, Rick?

**CHAIR:** Mr. Healey.

**MR. HEALEY:** I don't have the exact number here with me but I'm very confident, actually, that the number of foster homes right now is higher than last year. I recall looking at that, but I don't recall specific numbers – but I do recall the outcome.

**MS. ROGERS:** Why is that, Rick?

**MR. HEALEY:** I think we're doing a good job of recruiting our foster homes, to be honest with you. We've developed a really good relationship with the Foster Families Association. We give them – Harman will correct me – somewhere in the area of \$350,000. I hope that's close.

Part of that funding is for them to do recruitment for us, radio ads and so forth. Some of our best recruiters, of course, are our current foster homes. We have a number of pilots that we have in place to support foster families. I would like to think that we're doing a good job and that's why our numbers are going up.

**MS. ROGERS:** The numbers have gone up in foster families. Have the number of children in care gone up or that they're not being served in other accommodations?

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** In June the numbers were 1,013. The last number that we had was 1,005? Yes.

**CHAIR:** Ms. Perry.

**MS. PERRY:** Under section 3.1.01, Healthy Living, Sport and Recreation; the programs on the department website don't really match the funding area, so it's sometimes a little confusing to figure out. Is it possible to get a list of which programs are in each area?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Under 3.1.01. Okay, so Grants and Subsidies –

**MS. PERRY:** Yeah, that's for all the grants over all the departments, so it's probably more general.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yeah, there are four different areas. There's sport development, recreation and –

**MS. PERRY:** Seniors.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** – physical, healthy living and the provincial sport and rec. I'm not sure. Historically, is there any ...?

**MS. HEALEY:** Sport development, recreation and physical activity, healthy living initiatives and funding to provincial sport organizations and governing bodies are the four categories of funding through our grants and subsidies program in Healthy Living, Sport and Recreation.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

**MS. HEALEY:** We can certainly provide a list of all organizations that receive funding.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

Can I get a list of all the grants, who received them and what amount under the Seniors and Aging programs as well, and the Disability Policy Office?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yeah, there are no privacy issues.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay, so all the seniors' grants, the small grants and everything, just a complete list of ...

**MS. DEMPSTER:** With the Disability we wouldn't be able to disclose names for privacy purposes.

**MS. PERRY:** Right. Yes, that's quite understandable.

Thank you so much, Minister.

How are application-based programs adjudicated? Is there a specific amount of funding available for each district? Is it by region or is it just a first-come, first-served pot of funding?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Are you speaking to either specific area?

**MS. PERRY:** I'm speaking to all the grants programs, so not just ealthy Living, Sport and Recreation, but the seniors and Disability Office

as well. How are evaluation decisions made and how are the funding allocations made?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Okay, so I'll start and then I'll let staff pick up where you might need some additional substance. I think the majority of what I'm familiar with are application and merit based. There's a criteria – a very defined criteria – you have to meet. Primarily it's first-come, first-served.

I know we keep hearing about this per district – I haven't been here very long. Maybe someone took a total number and divided it by 40 and said I'm entitled to X figure. We don't have every MHA in the House applying because I guess it varies by region. You might have certain areas that are really pro for applying for applications and having various things running in their community. Then you have other districts where you just don't have that, so you'll probably never see it evened out.

I don't know ...

**MS. PERRY:** There's no regional balance or anything either. It's just more first-come, first-served.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** That's my understanding. Someone can correct me if I'm – it's an application, it is merit based, it's a criteria. Some of them you have to attach quotes if you're going to make purchases for equipment or whatever you're doing.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay. Thank you, Minister.

I'm down to my last page. Now I'm going to ask some questions about the Seniors' Advocate.

What work has the Seniors' Advocate been undertaking? Can you give us some specific examples of exactly what the person does?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** You asked specifically about the Seniors' Advocate, didn't you?

**MS. PERRY:** Yeah, I did.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** In November we announced the appointment of Dr. Suzanne Brake as the first ever. Really, she operates independently of us. We don't control and we don't direct.

Primarily, her work is to analyze systemic issues. She works with seniors and stakeholders to identify, review and analyze. She can make recommendations to us, as government, in directions that she feels we should be going. If she's saying I'm seeing an awful lot of this and this is a huge systemic issue, then we can, as a result of her recommendation, maybe put policy in place to help address that.

Another part of her position would be to promote awareness to the general public of various things that might be available. Again, I'll look to Rick in case I'm missing anything there on the Seniors' Advocate. It was our government that followed through on a commitment and put the Seniors' Advocate office in place. Other than that, she operates very independently of government.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

In terms of systemic issues, has the Seniors' Advocate identified any to date?

**MR. HEALEY:** Not at this point in time.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

In terms of awareness activities, can you list several examples of things the Seniors' Advocate has done in the last six months pertaining to awareness?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** (Inaudible) reach out to the Seniors' Advocate because she is independent of government. We have a very impressive calibre of person in that position and I'm sure she'd be happy to share what information that she could without breaching privacy.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

This is another general question now; this one pertains to mandatory reporting. Can the minister give an update on the implementation of mandatory reporting and how many incidents have been reported?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Mandatory reporting is ongoing of deaths and critical injuries. I don't have a total. Do I have a total? I'll ask Susan to ...?

**CHAIR:** Ms. Walsh.

**MS. WALSH:** Are you asking since the changes?

**MS. PERRY:** Yes.

**MS. WALSH:** There were 10 since March of this year.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay.

We have heard from some concerned individuals that parental coaching has been eliminated in youth protection. Can you tell us if any changes have been made? If so, can you outline them?

**CHAIR:** Ms. Walsh.

**MS. WALSH:** No, we haven't stopped the use of parent coaches. We did – and perhaps this is what you heard – have a new computer system. The information management system in our department changed to ISM and the delegation within it did actually leave off parent-coaching by accident, solely. So we actually fixed that last week and it is absolutely available and being used as required.

**MS. PERRY:** Okay. Thank you so much.

That concludes my questions.

**CHAIR:** Ms. Rogers.

**MS. ROGERS:** I know we've spoken a little bit about the number of people in kinship arrangements. Can we have a list of placements? For instance, the number of people in kinship, traditional foster homes, level 2, 3, 4, emergency placement homes, individual living arrangements and group homes. Can we just have those numbers?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** (Inaudible) online.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yeah, and update as we have updates.

**MS. ROGERS:** Thank you.

The wait times for family therapy services for parents, can we have an update on that? I know that there have been significant wait times for that.

**MS. WALSH:** So we have internal resources, social worker IIIs who provide counselling. There are six in total; five in the metro area and one in Marystown. We absolutely use that as a resource for us to try to access services more quickly for families.

If that's not available then we will purchase service in the community or, obviously, we would try to use free service at the Janeway or some other service availability.

Wait times are a challenge. There is no doubt about it.

**MS. ROGERS:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. WALSH:** We've found that ourselves within our department.

**MS. ROGERS:** Yes.

**MS. WALSH:** We actually have some work ongoing with the Department of Health to look at resources that they've recently acquired to see if there's something we can do there to expedite the services for our children and families.

**MS. ROGERS:** So, Susan, for instance, if I was mandated by court as a parent to have to do family therapy, if I'm living in St. John's, what kind of wait time might I have there?

**MS. WALSH:** I really apologize, I don't have a number on that. I just can't tell you how long.

**MS. ROGERS:** But they're a challenge.

**MS. WALSH:** It absolutely is longer than we would like. We would like immediate service in the best interest, of course, of children we serve –

**MS. ROGERS:** Absolutely, yeah.

**MS. WALSH:** – and their families. So we are focused on having a look at how we might get this sped up.

**MS. ROGERS:** Is it possible to get that information or ...?

**MS. WALSH:** There's nowhere we could easily access it. It would be a full file review process of every single individual file. It would be a fair bit of work to accomplish.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay, thank you.

So the Innu First Nation review of care, that's well underway, that inquiry?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** (Inaudible) released informing the province that she would be carrying out a review of the services. Did you say Innu or Inuit?

**MS. ROGERS:** I said Innu.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** You said Innu.

So, yes, the Innu, it probably haven't actually started, maybe, but the latest thing we know is that the federal government has now agreed to be a full partner in the Innu inquiry.

I did just hear in the media that the Innu – the Indigenous leadership there – is quite pleased that it will be a full tripartite process now going forward.

**MS. ROGERS:** Great. So how will the department be involved in that?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** This will be a full inquiry. The only way that the CSSD will be involved is, I guess, if we are asked for various information, things like that. We'll certainly co-operate in whatever manner we can because, at the end of the day, I believe we all want the exact same thing and that's improvement to the care of the children and youth.

**MS. ROGERS:** Do you have any idea of when it might actually start, the timeline? No, not yet.

Okay, thank you.

The Child and Youth Advocate's review for Nunatsiavut, I believe it is.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes.

**MS. ROGERS:** How will the department be involved in that?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** So, Nunatsiavut, they asked for something entirely different.

**MS. ROGERS:** Yes.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** That was that the Advocate would come in and do a review of the current system. I believe that is due to be wrapped up by the end of this calendar year, did I read that?

**OFFICIAL:** Fiscal year.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** This fiscal year.

**MS. ROGERS:** And just now starting, yes?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, and once again, our department will co-operate wherever and whatever means that we can coming out the review. We will certainly embrace the recommendations.

I think I can speak for the staff, I've been here nine months and I saw that any time there are recommendations put forth to improve safety to the children and youth in care, we certainly embrace those.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay.

Social work caseloads, what are they like now in child protection and then also what's happening in Labrador as well with caseloads?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** We have a provincial ratio of one in 20. There are many places where we are averaging around one in 22, but, as I spoke to in my opening, we are really, really challenged in certain parts of Labrador.

**MS. ROGERS:** Mm-hmm.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** So one of the things that we're going to try and address is in Natuashish, in particular, we do a fly in and fly out, two weeks in, two weeks out.

We have recently had some challenges around vacancies in Nain. So we have been kind of building onto the Natuashish fly in, fly out, but

dispersing them to other areas where they're needed.

There's been a tremendous effort gone into trying to recruit. We had zone managers that went over and actually addressed the latest social worker graduates. I was really pleased to hear from my staff that, I believe, this week there were 12 interviews as a result of them coming in.

We're trying. It's always been a challenge and I guess it's going to continue to be, maybe.

**MS. ROGERS:** Great. Yes, I understand that.

Boys and girls clubs got a huge cut. Where are they this year? It was core funding – well, there was the whole discussion about –

**MS. DEMPSTER:** That's not our department.

**MS. ROGERS:** Not your department, okay, I wasn't sure.

Okay. Thank you very much.

Can we have the most recent stats on reports under the *Adult Protection Act*? Is this under your department?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Yes, that is.

Within the last fiscal year, we have had one that has been declared in need of protection. There have certainly been a lot of improvements in the area of adult protection. I think all of that can be attributed to the fact that people are now more understanding of their rights and more in tune with when an adult may need help or support. There's just been one.

**MS. ROGERS:** Okay. When will we see a provincial disabilities act?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** There's a lot of work happening with the act. It's a monumental daunting task. I go down sometimes and I speak to Mary Reid and these folks down there. It's a lot of work, as they're working with stakeholders and community groups.

Maybe because I've been here a number of years and I've heard timelines attached to things and

you get held accountable, so I hesitate to put a timeline, other than we're working on it and, hopefully, in the not-to-distant future.

**MS. ROGERS:** So not by the end of this fiscal year or ...?

**MS. DEMPSTER:** Consultations will be held with the Advisory Council, the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities and various other stakeholders. Sessions will culminate in an inclusion symposium; I think we talked about that recently. We will be holding a symposium in early December. Service NL, my colleague, is a part of this initiative in terms of her work with review of the *Buildings Accessibility Act* that carries out similar goals as we do. TW also crosses over.

I have the Disability Policy Office, but when people come to us I reach out to TW and Service NL to have them help me make this a more inclusive province. We will have that symposium in early December. Then we will take that information, go from there and continue to work on the act.

**MS. ROGERS:** I have no further questions. I want to thank you, once again, for the critical, crucial work that you all do. Thank you for your time this evening.

It's great to see some of the advances that I know many of you have been working on to achieve over the past few years. Congratulations for that.

Thank you very much.

**MS. DEMPSTER:** You're kindly welcome.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Since there are no further questions, I now ask the Clerk to recall 1.1.01.

**CLERK:** 1.1.01 to 3.1.06 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall 1.1.01 to 3.1.06 inclusive carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 3.1.06 carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall the total carry?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, total heads, carried.

**CHAIR:** Shall I report the Estimates of the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development carried without amendment?

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation carried without amendment.

**CHAIR:** We do have minutes from the last meeting we need to pass. I call for a motion to approve the minutes from April 19.

Ms. Parsley.

All those in favour?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against?

Carried.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

**CHAIR:** The next meeting of the Social Services Committee will be on Monday, April 30, at 6 p.m.

I now ask for a motion to adjourn.

So moved by Ms. Perry.

Thank you so much. Have a good night.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.