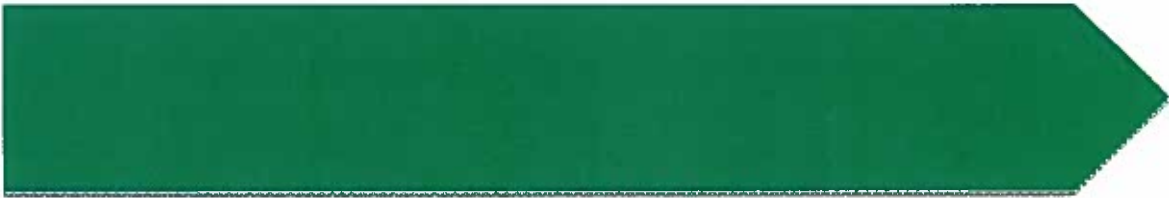


# **Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors**

## **Annual Report 2020-21**



**Please Note:**

This document was prepared in consultation with the Disability Policy Office to maximize accessibility and follows:

- Government of Newfoundland Labrador's **Accessible Communications Policy** in which clear/plain language, accessible formatting and taglines are used to ensure content is readable and understood.
- **Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines** (Canadian National Institute for the Blind). Italics or upper-case letters have not been used for the titles of acts, titles, sub-titles or for emphasis. Bold or larger fonts are used for emphasis.

**Available in Alternate Format**

Please contact:

**Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors**  
Seniors and Aging Division  
Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development  
6th Floor, West Block, Confederation Building  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Telephone: (709)729-4291 or Toll Free 1-888-494-2266

Fax: (709) 729-6103

Email: [PACAS@gov.nl.ca](mailto:PACAS@gov.nl.ca)



# Contents

Message from the Chair .....	1
Overview .....	3
Highlights and Partnerships .....	4
Report on Performance 2020-21 Objectives .....	6
Opportunities and Challenges .....	13
Financial Information .....	15
Appendix A: PACAS Membership.....	16

## Message from the Chair

As Chair of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors (hereinafter referred to as PACAS or Council), I am pleased to present its annual report for the fiscal year 2020-21.

The Council has a responsibility to ensure that the Provincial Government is aware of the viewpoints of older adults. To this end, Council members work to engage with communities and provide informed advice to the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development to support policies, programs, resources and education to foster age-friendly communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador

The COVID-19 pandemic has helped to bring many of the challenges facing seniors, such as food insecurity, social isolation and a lack of affordable and accessible transportation into clearer focus. It has also shown us there are other ways to communicate and connect with other seniors, and across generations, through technology, community-minded organizations and businesses, and the sheer kindness of friends, family and, sometimes, people we have never met.

While there have no doubt been challenges over the past year, seniors and older adults have shown a spirited resilience that speaks to our resolve to continue to participate in and contribute to our communities and our society. Council continues to channel and share that resolve in advocating on behalf of all seniors and older adults in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This annual report has been prepared and submitted in accordance with the Council's obligation as a category three entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. The work undertaken by the Council during the reporting period supports the mandate of the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

My signature below is indicative of the Council's accountability for the preparation of this annual report and achievement of the results reported herein.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Oldford".

Linda Oldford, Chairperson

Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors

## Overview

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors (PACAS or Council) was announced in 2004 as one initiative to facilitate the provincial response to the needs of an aging population. In 2005, the Council was established to provide advice to the Minister Responsible for Aging and Seniors (currently the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development) on issues related to older persons and the aging process.

The 2020-21 Council consists of 11 members, including a Chair, (See Appendix A) and is listed in Schedule C of the **Public Service Commission Act**. The Public Service Commission (PSC), through the Independent Appointment Commission (IAC), solicits candidates for vacancies with consideration given to geography, culture, gender, background, experience and skills. Members are appointed for terms of up to three years by the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development. The Seniors and Aging Division of the department serves as the Secretariat to the Council, including the provision of support for meetings and other activities.

Council members represent a diverse cross-section of older adults, many of whom are experienced in working with stakeholders in areas of critical importance to seniors, including health care, long-term care, mental health, and financial well-being. As a result, Council benefits from a membership with a broad base of knowledge in areas of importance to seniors and those who support seniors.

The mandate of the Council is to advise and inform the Minister on issues, concerns, and requirements of seniors and those who support them. This includes ensuring that the Provincial Government considers the perspective of older adults when developing both current and future legislation, policies, programs, and services. The Council also provides a strong, collective voice for

older adults in the development of a wide range of programs to support the independence and well-being of an aging population.

The Council's aims/lines of business include:

- Challenge ageism;
- Promote the value and worth of people as they age;
- Foster an environment of understanding within the Provincial Government and the community with regard to aging and demographic change;
- Identify areas of opportunity within the Provincial Government to develop and/or adapt legislation, policies, programs and services to better support an aging population;
- Support the work of the Seniors' Advocate; and
- Inform the Provincial Government on the potential impacts of legislation, policies, programs, and services on people as they age.

More information on the Council may be found at:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/seniors/focus/provincialadvisory/>.

## **Highlights and Partnerships**

The Council has worked to be responsive to the issues that have emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the Seniors' Advocate's 2019 report, the Auditor General's 2017 report, priorities identified by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Seniors Forum, and observations from the COVID-19 Seniors' Working Group.

In addition to issues explicitly stated in the Council's Activity Plan for the 2020-21 fiscal year, PACAS continues to consider ways to improve outcomes for seniors in areas such as food security, opportunities for healthy, active living and access to healthcare and community services.



Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020-21 provided opportunities for the Council to explore new ways to collaborate and continue to inform and advise the Province on issues related to older persons, aging, and demographic change.

Key activities included:

- Assisted in the selection of 2020-21 Seniors of Distinction Award recipients. This annual award recognizes and celebrates the contributions, achievements and diversity of Newfoundland and Labrador seniors.
- Promoted SeniorsNL's information and referral services.
- Hosted presentations from SeniorsNL to inform Council members about issues actively raised by seniors, and individuals who support seniors, throughout the province. The Chair of the Council is the vice-president of the Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) 50+ Federation and each group regularly informs the other regarding priorities related to seniors.
- Participated in the COVID-19 Vulnerable Task Group and Seniors Working Group to better understand challenges faced by seniors, and those who support seniors, during the pandemic.
- Continued to participate in the Public Health Agency of Canada's Pan-Canadian Age-Friendly Reference Group. This group is committed to advancing the age-friendly movement nationally and internationally through the development of flexible national guidelines, the creation of helpful community resources and the coordination of knowledge exchange activities.

- Continued to participate in the Age-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Working Group to advise and recommend improvements to the Age-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador Communities Grant Program.

## Report on Performance

### Issue 1: Social Isolation

Social isolation affects both physical and mental health. In 2019, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced the Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Social Inclusion Initiative with the goal of addressing social isolation. COVID-19 has further demonstrated the importance of social inclusion for seniors and the negative implications of isolation and loneliness.

#### 2020-21 Objective:

- By March 31, 2021, the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors will have provided the Minister with recommendations on how to reduce social isolation and loneliness among seniors.

#### 2020-21 Indicator:

- Ongoing promotion of the social inclusion initiatives of the Department.

Indicator	Report on Activities
Ongoing promotion of the social inclusion initiatives of the Department	<p>During the period covered by this report, PACAS was actively engaged with the COVID-19 Seniors' Working Group which comprises various government and community-based agencies that support seniors. One of the main topics explored by this group is how to support social inclusion for seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador.</p> <p>Engagement with the working group allowed PACAS to exchange ideas around social inclusion opportunities and</p>

Indicator	Report on Activities
	<p>supports and to promote CSSD's Seniors' Social Inclusion Initiative to other government and community agencies.</p> <p>Discussions held, and feedback gathered, will help to inform future delivery of the Seniors' Social Inclusion Initiative.</p> <p>As the secretariat for PACAS, the Seniors and Aging Division incorporates information gathered from discussions and feedback into recommendations for the Minister on the issue of promoting and supporting social inclusion opportunities for seniors and older adults.</p>

**Summary:**

- The 2020-21 objective of providing the Minister with recommendations on how to reduce social isolation and loneliness among seniors has been met. PACAS successfully promoted the social inclusion initiatives of the department and through records of its discussions, provided insights and advice to the Minister for consideration in program and policy delivery and development.

**2021-22 Objective:**

- By March 31, 2022, Council will provide advice to the Minister on how to address the digital divide for seniors.

**2021-22 Indicator:**

- Increased use of technology and technology support services by seniors.

## **Issue 2: Elder Abuse**

Elder abuse has been identified by both the Government of Canada and the Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Advocate as a critical issue facing seniors. Additionally, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Seniors Forum is exploring the possible incorporation of elder abuse as a topic in the upcoming work cycle.

Elder abuse can include but is not limited to:

- Physical violence;
- Sexual violence;
- Emotional violence;
- Psychological violence;
- Spiritual violence;
- Cultural violence;
- Verbal Abuse;
- Financial Abuse; and
- Neglect.

The challenges faced in the definition of elder abuse are complex and include balancing the concept of vulnerability with independence and capacity.

### **2020-21 Objective:**

- By March 31, 2021, the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors will provide advice to CSSD on ways to strengthen the **Adult Protection Act**.

### **2020-21 Indicator:**

- Amendments to the **Adult Protection Act** which enhance client rights and procedural fairness.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Report on Activities</b>
<p>Amendments to the <b>Adult Protection Act</b> which enhance client rights and procedural fairness</p>	<p>During the reporting period, adult protection staff of the Seniors and Aging Division of CSSD consulted with PACAS on proposed legislative amendments to the <b>Adult Protection Act</b>.</p> <p>Members of the council considered proposed amendments and provided feedback to adult protection staff. This feedback was incorporated into the proposed legislative amendments.</p>

**Summary:**

- The 2020-21 objective of providing the Minister of CSSD advice on ways to strengthen the **Adult Protection Act** has been met. Council provided advice and feedback on amendments to the **Adult Protection Act**.

**2021-22 Objective:**

- By March 31, 2022, Council will provide advice to the Minister related to NL's participation in FPT discussions on the establishment of a national definition of elder abuse.

**2021-22 Indicator:**

- Establishment of a national definition of elder abuse.

### Issue 3: Financial Literacy and Security

Financial planning and security are a core issue facing seniors. Financial security intersects with a variety of other issues including housing, financial abuse, food security, and transportation.

#### 2020-21 Objective:

- By March 31, 2021, Council will contribute to the creation of draft materials to support financial retirement planning for individuals living with low income.

#### 2020-21 Indicator:

- Representatives from Council will participate in a drafting working group to prepare materials for retirement planning for individuals with low income.

Indicator	Report on Activities
Representatives from Council will participate in a drafting working group to prepare materials for retirement planning for individual with low income.	During 2020-21, PACAS formed a working group with representation from the Council, as well as Seniors NL, and officials from the Poverty Reduction Division of CSSD.  While the Covid-19 pandemic delayed progress on this indicator, three meetings of this working group took place.  Work on this indicator will continue in 2021-22.

#### Summary:

The 2020-21 objective of contributing to the creation of draft materials to support financial retirement planning for individuals living with low income has been partially met. Council did establish and participate in a drafting working group to prepare materials for retirement planning for individuals with low income,

however, their work was delayed by challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**2021-22 Objective:**

- By March 31, 2022, Council will contribute to the creation of a new poverty reduction strategy for NL.

**2021-22 Indicator**

- Advice provided in written or oral format towards the development of a new poverty reduction strategy.<sup>1</sup>

**Issue 4: Demographic Change**

In June 2017, the Auditor General submitted his **Report to the House of Assembly on Performance Audits of Departments and Crown Agencies**.

The report provides recommendations related to the government’s preparedness for changing demographics. The Council will advise the Department in identifying a path to achieve the recommendations identified by the Auditor General.

**2020-21 Objective:**

- By March 31, 2021 Council will contribute to the terms of reference and workplan of the interdepartmental working group on changing demographics.

**2020-21 Indicator:**

- Representatives from Council will provide ongoing updates for Council on work of the interdepartmental working group on changing demographics.

Indicator	Report on Activities
Representatives from Council will provide	During the reporting period Council was consulted, and its feedback considered, in the drafting of the terms of

<sup>1</sup> An incorrect indicator was previously published in the 2020-23 Activity Plan in relation to Issue 4.3 Financial Literacy and Security. As such, this will be replaced by: “Advice provided in written or oral format towards the development of a new poverty reduction strategy”.

Indicator	Report on Activities
ongoing updates for Council on work of the interdepartmental working group on changing demographics.	reference and work plan for the Interdepartmental Working Group on Changing Demographics.  The working group is a standing agenda item for PACAS. Seniors and Aging staff update members regularly on the progress of the interdepartmental working group.

**Summary:**

The 2020-21 objective of contributing to the terms of reference and work plan of the interdepartmental working group on changing demographics has been met. Council receives regular updates on the work of the interdepartmental working group on changing demographics.

**2021-22 Objective:**

- By March 31, 2022, Council will advise CSSD on creation of a demographics change lens to be applied across departments in development of legislation, programs, and services.

**2021-22 Indicator:**

- Creation of a demographics change lens.



# Opportunities and Challenges

## Opportunities:

- While many of the challenges facing seniors and older adults are not new, the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified some of them and brought them into sharper focus. In that way, COVID-19 has created an enhanced awareness of ways governments and community organizations can help seniors and older adults as they seek to age well in their communities. As a result of the pandemic, the Vulnerable Populations Task Group, chaired by the Department of Health and Community Services, was created. The task group is made up of multiple working groups and includes more than 80 organizations and individuals from throughout the Province. The COVID-19 Seniors' Working Group is one of these working groups, and was established to help ensure the pandemic's impact on seniors and older adults were considered in pandemic planning, response and recovery.
- Through its increasing engagement with both the Provincial Government and non-government organizations, Council has the opportunity to forge new and strengthen existing collaborative links with other seniors and aging stakeholders for the benefit of all. The COVID-19 pandemic has also strengthened the Council's capability to utilize technology to enable virtual collaboration with its own members and stakeholders with other agencies.
- The Council will continue to liaise with other seniors' organizations in the Province to ensure collaboration and communication. These organizations include: The NL 50+ Federation, the Seniors' Coalition, the Seniors' Advocate, Seniors NL and Connections for Seniors.
- Moving forward, the Council intends to widen its diversity lens when considering the challenges and opportunities before seniors and older

adults. Council intends to invite leaders from historically underrepresented groups such as Indigenous peoples, newcomers to Canada, the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community and others to ensure more voices are reflected as it continues to advocate on behalf of seniors and older adults to the Minister.

**Challenges:**

- Ageism and negative stereotypes associated with aging continue to exist in society and the Council is helping lead the conversation about changing attitudes.
- Opportunities for social inclusion and transportation continue to be challenges for many seniors, and older adults, as does food security. Council continues to seek improvements to realities and outcomes in these areas through collaboration with community groups, continued engagement with government officials and the provision of advice to the Minister. Financial literacy is important for good financial planning. Many seniors in the province live with low and fixed incomes, which sometimes presents challenges. Representatives from Council will continue to participate in a drafting working group to prepare materials to assist in retirement planning for individuals with low income in 2021-22.

## Financial Information

Members of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors do not receive remuneration. The Council members are reimbursed for expenses and travel costs. Council's budget is included in the Seniors and Aging Division's budget. As detailed in the table below, the costs for 2020-21 totaled \$10,016.14.

<b>Area of Expenditure</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Purchased Services (meeting space rentals, food and beverage, etc.)	\$4,463.45
Transportation and Communication (Travel costs, per diems, accommodations, incidentals, etc.)	\$5,552.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,016.44</b>

# Appendix A: Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors Members 2019-20

## **Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors Biographies**

### **Linda Oldford, Chair (Gander).**

Linda Oldford spent 35 years in a career with the Federal Government (Service Canada). During that time, she was a union activist and held many elected positions, including three terms as the Public Service Alliance of Canada's Director for Women NL. She is First Vice-President of the Newfoundland and Labrador 50+ Federation and chairs the 50+ Club in Burnside. She serves on several advisory boards, which include the Town of Gander Seniors Board, the Central Wellness Board, the Aging Research Centre NL and Safer Meds NL, and is one of two community members of Health Accord NL. She serves as a member of the Burnside Community Association, the Anglican Church Women and St Alban's Vestry. She has a keen interest and involvement in Indigenous culture and is a member of First Light Newfoundland and Labrador. She is also a member of Time in the Hall Square Dancers on the Eastport Peninsula.

**Dr. Rana Aslanova (St. John's)** Rana Aslanova holds MSc and PhD in Clinical Epidemiology from Memorial University of Newfoundland. She has served as a client/volunteer services coordinator for the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Health Centre, and is currently a research manager and lecturer in Faculty of Medicine, MUN. Rana is a member of the Canadian Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics (CSEB), Research Evidence Into Action for Community Health/ Atlantic Interdisciplinary Research Network (REACH/AIRN), Editorial Offices of the Clinical Rheumatology Journal, The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry & Current Oncology journal, and Women in Science and Engineering Newfoundland and Labrador (WISE).

**Leo Bonnell (Clareville)** is a retired bank manager and active community leader. He has been active in local community affairs throughout the province and has held leadership positions with his church board, the chamber of commerce, bankers' association, Lions Club International, Rotary International, and other organizations. He is past chair of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors; vice-chair of the Random Age-Friendly Communities Board, and is an advisory member for the Public Health Agency of Canada's Pan-Canadian Age-Friendly Communities Reference Group.

**Noreen Careen (Labrador City)** Having an undergraduate degree in women's studies, Noreen Careen was Executive Director of the Labrador West Status of Women's Council for more than 20 years. She served in a variety of roles with the Hope Haven's Women's Shelter for over 20 years and was involved with many other initiatives, from family resource centres to the Labrador West Housing and Homelessness Coalition and the Newfoundland and Labrador Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse through SeniorsNL.

**Maisie Clark (Campbellton)** was born in Port Blandford and taught school in Newfoundland and Labrador and northern Manitoba. Because her husband served with the Canadian Air Force, she has lived in a number of communities across Canada, the United States and Europe, where she was active with volunteer organizations and local governments. She has been very involved with Girl Guides of Canada, the Lewisporte and Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Lewisporte Area Economic Development Committee. Ms. Clark has served as the mayor of CFB, Gypsonville, Manitoba and has been the mayor of Campbellton since 2001. In 2013, she was named one of Newfoundland and Labrador's Seniors of Distinction.

**Marie Brennan Downey (Stephenville Crossing)** holds a Bachelor in Social Work from Memorial University and has worked in a variety of health care related positions throughout her career. In addition to working as a Social Work Clinical

Leader, Marie also served as Outreach Services Coordinator, and Program Manager of Rehabilitative Services in acute and long-term care facilities. Marie currently services on the Board of Trustees of Western Health and continues to be active in her community through volunteer activities.

**Dr. William Eaton: MD, FCFP,(PC) (St. John's)** Earned MD and MSc (Clinical epidemiology) degrees at Memorial University. Dr. Eaton worked clinically for 40 years in Family Medicine, long-term care, and Palliative Care and for 36 years of those years at Memorial's medical school. He is a retired Associate Professor of Family Medicine, a former Chair of the St. John's Alzheimer Society, and a former Program Director for Family Medicine at Memorial University. He has six children and eleven grandchildren.

**Helen Handrigan (St. John's)** Helen Handrigan received a Master of Social Work degree in 1978 and is now a retired social worker, having 35 years of practice in acute care, family court and tenant relations. Her last position was Senior Housing Officer with the City of St. John's. Since 2013 she has served on the Board of Directors with SeniorsNL.

**Roseanne Leonard (Paradise)** holds a Master of Business Administration from Memorial University and serves as Managing Director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Community Business Development Corporations. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Alzheimer Society of Newfoundland and Labrador and a former Chairperson of the Newfoundland and Labrador Employers Council. Roseanne also holds a Masters Certificate in Project Management from York University.

**Judy Pardy (Cartwright)** Judy Pardy has a lengthy history in socioeconomic development with communities in Labrador. She was previously Executive Director with the Southeastern Aurora Development Corporation and has served in many capacities including archaeology and recreation roles. She is currently

involved with the Sandwich Bay 50+ Club and as a peer volunteer with SeniorsNL.

**Wayde Rowsell (St. Lawrence)** Wayde Rowsell began his volunteer service as a board member with the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees, while employed as a Laboratory Technologist with the U.S. Memorial Hospital. In 1985 Mr. Rowsell was elected to the St. Lawrence Town Council and re-elected an additional six times, serving five terms as mayor. He is a founding member of the St. Lawrence Heritage Society and served on the boards of the Heritage Run Tourism Association and Greater Lamaline Area Development Association. Mr. Rowsell's many activities include health care, economic development, workplace health and safety, heritage and sports.

**Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors**

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Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development

6th Floor, West Block, Confederation Building

P.O. Box 8700

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Telephone: (709)729-4291 or Toll Free 1-888-494-2266

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Email: [PACAS@gov.nl.ca](mailto:PACAS@gov.nl.ca)