

VIA E-MAIL
Ref: 310660

Sandra Case
Chief Executive Officer
Community Social Services Employers Association
E-mail: SCase@cssea.bc.ca

Dear Sandra Case:

I am pleased to provide you with an update on our work to strengthen social services in British Columbia. Today marks the launch of a focused engagement to shape how social services can be better coordinated and integrated so people get the support they need.

As you all know, and have expressed over the past years, we consistently hear that social services can be hard to navigate and at times require duplicative processes. This is not about your individual efforts or devotion to the people we serve, but rather a result of how the social sector system has evolved over many years. We have heard from you that services are often disconnected across ministries and programs, making them hard to both access and move between especially during major life changes.

We know in British Columbia we have the expertise within and external to government to better coordinate and integrate these critical services. But we do need to start with an engagement and dialogue with a focus on learning from those closest to the delivery and experience of social services. This includes frontline workers, community organizations and sector partners who help people navigate services as well as labour leaders, Indigenous partners and other jurisdictions that deliver social services – with a focus on understanding what tools and supports are needed to help people access services more quickly and effectively.

At the same time, we will be mapping social services across government to understand how programs connect today and where gaps, overlap, and potential opportunities for better alignment exist.

A new Deputy Ministers' committee, chaired by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and working in collaboration with Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Health, Public Safety and Solicitor General, and the Public Service Agency, will oversee the work to ensure a coordinated, whole-of-government approach. Other ministries across the social sector will be consulted and engaged throughout the process. Emily Arthur, Assistant Deputy Minister of Strategic Alignment and Integration, has been appointed to provide dedicated leadership and to support the work across ministries.

This engagement builds on what we have consistently heard through independent reports, past engagements, service providers and people with lived experience. It builds on progress already underway through Connected Services BC to better connect services and organize them around people's needs. The results will help inform the next steps to better organize our services and improve the experience of the people we serve.

This work does not change the services and supports people currently rely on. While this work is underway, ministry services and programs will continue as usual.

1. There are no changes to income assistance or disability assistance programs as part of this work.
2. Work to advance implementation of Children and Youth with Support Needs and related mandate commitments continues.
3. People will continue to access existing services and supports as usual while this work is underway.

As always, our focus remains on supporting the people who rely on these services.

We are committed to sharing updates as we have them, sharing information about engagement opportunities as appropriate, and sharing what we learn. In the meantime, if you have questions or would like to identify the most appropriate contact for future engagement, please continue to connect with us through your usual ministry channels.

Please feel free to share this message with those who would find it relevant. We look forward to continuing the conversation.

Sincerely,

Keith Godin
Deputy Minister for Children and Family
Development

Raymond Fieltsch
Acting Deputy Minister for Social Development
and Poverty Reduction

Sent on behalf of the Deputy Ministers by:

 **Client Relations Branch**
Executive Operations
Ministry of Children and Family Development