



March 11, 2019

VIA E-MAIL  
Ref: 242006

Lisa Lapointe  
Chief Coroner  
Office of the Chief Coroner  
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Email: [ChiefCoronerCorrespondence@gov.bc.ca](mailto:ChiefCoronerCorrespondence@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Lisa Lapointe:

Re: *Coroner's Inquest into the death of Rhett Patrick Victor Mutch*

Thank you for your letter of July 05, 2018, addressed to the Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development, in which you provided a copy of the Verdict at Inquest concerning the death of Rhett Patrick Victor Mutch. Minister Conroy has requested that I respond on her behalf to the recommendations directed to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

The attached Action Plan has been developed following careful consideration of the jury's recommendations. This Action Plan provides a summary of service enhancements implemented and/ or initiated by the MCFD for recommendations 4, 5, and 6. In addition, we are working with our partners in the ministries of Health and Public Safety and Solicitor General, and agencies involved to develop an Action Plan in response to recommendation 11; once completed we will forward to you for consideration.

MCFD will continue to work in collaboration with our partners to improve supports and better outcomes for children, youth, and their families.

I want to thank the British Columbia Coroners Service and the jury for their work on the inquest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Cory Heavener".

Cory Heavener  
Provincial Director of Child Welfare and Aboriginal Services  
Ministry of Children and Family Development  
Enclosure (1)

pc:

Ceryl May, ADM, Policy and Legislation  
Philip Twyford, ADM, Finance and Corporate Services  
Carolyn Kamper, ADM, Strategic Priorities

**Ministry of Children and Family Development Action Plan in Response to the *Verdict at Coroners Inquest into the Death of Rhett Patrick Victor Mutch, May 19 2017***

*\*The Coroners Inquest Jury directed 4 of 12 recommendations to MCFD, 1 of which is a joint recommendation with Prime BC and Ministry of Health*

Coroners Inquest Jury Recommendations	Completed Actions	Planned Deliverables	Projected Dates
<p><b>Recommendation #4: To have fully supported transition (Multi-disciplinary/ Collaborative) plans for child, to youth, to young adult, to 19 plus.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 5 Child and Youth in Care Policies was updated and released in 2017, including <i>Policy 5.10: Preparing Youth to Live Successfully in the Community</i>. This policy focusses on supporting and preparing youth in their transition out of care.</li> <li>Updates to <i>Policy 5.10 Preparing Youth to Live Successfully in the Community</i> were released on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018.</li> <li>Updates to Chapter 5 included a new policy to promote coordinated transition planning for youth in care with special needs, as they approach adulthood. This new policy was released on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018.</li> </ul> <p>Current planning documents include the Care Plan (for youth in care) and the Plan for Independence (for youth on a Youth Agreement) – planning is multi-disciplinary, collaborative and involves a wide-range of important people to support the wellbeing of the child or youth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Care Plan includes key information about the child or youth across various domains including identity, health, education/social, recreational activities, placement/living arrangement, self-care and independence skills, permanency, and rights of children and youth in care. The Care Plan is reviewed every six months after a child comes into care.</li> <li>The Plan for Independence is developed collaboratively by the youth and their social worker, and includes key information regarding the youth’s strengths, short and long-term goals related to: education; mental health and well ness; cultural or spiritual goals; and life skills amongst others. The Plan for Independence also looks at the youth’s safety needs and concerns, and encourages the involvement of caring adults to ensure success of the plan. The terms of the Youth Agreement and the Plan for Independence are reviewed every six months, or more frequently as needed.</li> <li>In 2015, the “<i>Youth Mental Health Transition Protocol Agreement</i>” was signed between MCFD and MOH. This Protocol facilitates a collaborative approach to transitioning youth/young adults from Child and Youth Mental Health Services to Adult Mental Health and Substance Use Services. The Protocol is underpinned by a “best fit” principle, where a young adult has the ability to remain with Child and Youth Mental Health until their 21st birthday, if determined that this is the best service plan for the young person.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 7, Youth and Young Adult Policies, amended to place greater emphasis on coordinated transition planning form youth to young adult and transitions into community.</li> <li>MCFD is part of an Advisory Committee, along with MOH and MMHA, supporting a BC Pediatric Society project with the objective of improving transitions for youth with mental health disorders who are managed by community pediatricians. The project will inform the development of <i>BCPS Mental Health Guidelines</i></li> <li>Strategic Priorities is currently engaging with Indigenous communities, youth, other community partners, DAAs and MCFD staff to better understand the needs for youth transitions, including the Agreements with Young Adults program. Proposals will be submitted for government consideration.</li> </ul>	<p>Fiscal 2020/21</p> <p>Fiscal 2019/20</p> <p>Fiscal 2019/20</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Agreements with Young Adults program provides financial support to young adults who, at the time of their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, were subject to a Continuing Custody Order, receiving services through a Youth Agreement, or were in the guardianship of the director of adoption or of a director under s. 51 of the Infants Act. Eligible youth adults must be enrolled in a post-secondary educational program or a vocational training program, or attending either a rehabilitation program or a recognized life skills program. The program was expanded on April 1, 2018:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The upper age limit for eligibility was increased to the young adult’s 27<sup>th</sup> birthday;</li> <li>○ Young adults enrolled in a multi-year educational, life skills, rehabilitative, or vocational programs may access AYA funding over scheduled program breaks, such as summer months, if they are enrolled in and plan to attend the program after the break; and</li> <li>○ Increase of \$250/month in funding, from \$1,000 to \$1,250 for needs-based supports.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The “AYA Online Resource Tool” provides workers with practice information, so that they are well-equipped to support young adults achieve their goals as they transition to independence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tip Sheets have been created that cover topics like drug and alcohol supports; how to engage with young adults; considerations for mental health; and trauma-informed practice.</li> <li>○ Practice Enhancers cover topics such as supporting street-entrenched young adults, and working with Indigenous youth and young adults.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An “Agreements with Young Adults Community of Practice” was established in September 2018 to promote consistency in practice across the province.</li> </ul> <p>Other sources of support for young adults include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Education Assistance Fund, which provides up to \$5,500 per year for education-related expenses to youth who, at the time of their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, had been subject to a Continuing Custody Order, or who had been subject to a Continuing Custody Order for at least 5 years during their childhood.</li> </ul>		

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Coroners Inquest Jury Recommendations	Completed Actions	Planned Deliverables	Projected Dates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AgedOut.com is an innovative, engaging website that uses interactive learning modules, real-time chat, and text-to-speech technology to provide young adults with resources and information they need to successfully transition to adulthood.</li> <li>The ministry worked in collaboration with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training to expand the tuition fee waiver program to provide enhanced supports for former youth in care who pursue post-secondary education.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Recommendation #5: To ensure the Young Adult Program adds a Life Skill Options component to its program with an option to renew every three months up to age 25.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>October 2016 program expansion: A life skills option was added to the AYA program. Policy states that a young adult can attend a life skills program for up to three months, but this can be extended on a case-by-case basis. Agreements can also be renewed; however, the maximum total duration of AYA is 48 months between the ages of 19 and 27.</li> <li>Young adults may access the AYA program if they are attending a rehabilitative program (e.g. mental health or addictions) for a minimum of 15 hrs. per week.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Priorities is currently engaging with Indigenous communities, youth, other community partners, DAAs and MCFD staff to better understand the needs for youth transitions, including the Agreements with Young Adults program. Proposals will be submitted for government consideration.</li> </ul>	<p>Fiscal 2019/20</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #6: To maintain continuation of same support workers as a child ages.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Recruitment and Retention of Staff</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2016, the Ministry announced a “Retention Incentives Program” for frontline staff, in 28 hard-to-recruit communities.</li> <li>The Ministry has commenced work on an Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Strategy, including the implementation of a cultural self-assessment tool that will support the retention of Indigenous staff.</li> <li>The newest version of the child welfare training was launched in 2018. The program consists of seven courses aimed at providing new hires with the skills they need to successfully complete the duties and responsibilities associated with their positions thereby promoting retention and staff continuity. Over the course of the CW new hire training program, staff receive training in interview and court skills, using the SDM tools, building indigenous cultural safety, and working with clients on issues of Domestic Violence and /or Problematic Substance Use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In partnership with the BC Public Service Agency, the Ministry is developing a recruitment and retention strategy for frontline staff.</li> <li>A qualifications project is currently underway, which will likely expand the applicant pool for frontline staff and place a greater emphasis on competencies in the recruitment process.</li> <li>MCFD is hiring an additional 120 Child and Youth Mental Health Practitioners over 3 years (2017/18 to 2019/20). The first year of the hiring included hiring of 40 new practitioners</li> </ul>	<p>Fiscal 2019/20 to Fiscal 2020/21</p> <p>Fiscal 2019/20</p> <p>Fiscal 2018/19/20/21</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MCFD will be implementing a temporary market adjustment (TMA) for child protection social workers. The TMA aims to address recruitment and retention issues for child protection positions</li> </ul>	Fiscal 2019/20

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Coroner's Inquest Jury Recommendations	Completed Actions	Joint Planning with Leads and Partners November 2018 to September 2019
<p><b>Recommendation #11:</b>  <b>Prime BC, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development to enter into an MOU to provide access to information between all three agencies.</b></p>	<p><b>Specific to the Ministry of Children and Family Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>Child, Family and Community Service Act</i> allows for information to be disclosed and shared:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ S. 79 outlines the circumstances under which a director may disclose information without consent.</li> <li>○ S. 96 outlines the Director's right to any information that is necessary to enable the director to exercise his or her powers or perform his or her duties or functions under the CFCSA.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Specific to the Ministry of Health as Lead in Partnership with Public Safety and Solicitor General, Health Authorities and Police Agencies:</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Health, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, health authorities and police agencies, has developed a provincial Toolkit for police and Health Authorities to guide them in working together to address the needs of people with mental health and/or substance use issues.</p> <p>The toolkit identifies current initiatives in place to build collaborative responses between response services as well as outlines existing provincial and federal privacy legislation that governs information sharing between service providers.</p> <p>The toolkit includes information to support the development of local protocols and is intended to further integrated approaches between agencies.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Children and Family Development, in partnership with the Solicitor General, are prepared to work towards developing a MOU with the appropriate lead agency, as identified by the BC Coroners Service.</p> <p>Leads representing all ministries and agencies involved have been identified and are working together to create an action plan.</p>