March 28, 2019

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015 [Our File #: PRE/22/2019]

On March 13, 2019 the Premier’s Office received your request for access to the following records/information:

“January 10, 2019 Information Note: JPS - Second Meeting of the Minister's Committee on Violence against Women and Girls.”

I am pleased to inform you that a decision has been made by the Chief of Staff of the Premier’s Office to provide access to the requested information.

You may ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the processing of your access request, as set out in section 42 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the Act). A request to the Commissioner must be made in writing within 15 business days of the date of this letter or within a longer period that may be allowed by the Commissioner. Contact information for the Information and Privacy Commissioner is as follows:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
2 Canada Drive
P. O. Box 13004, Stn. A
St. John’s, NL. A1B 3V8

Telephone: (709) 729-6309
Toll-Free: 1-877-729-6309
Facsimile: (709) 729-6500

You may also appeal directly to the Supreme Court Trial Division within 15 business days after you receive this response, pursuant to section 52 of the Act (a copy of sections 42 and 52 of the Act have been enclosed for your reference).

This response will be published as outlined on the Completed Access to Information Requests website. (http://atipp-search.gov.nl.ca/) If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me by telephone at (709)729-3570 or by e-mail at joybuckle@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,

Joy Buckle
ATIPP Coordinator
**Access or correction complaint**

42. (1) A person who makes a request under this Act for access to a record or for correction of personal information may file a complaint with the commissioner respecting a decision, act or failure to act of the head of the public body that relates to the request.

(2) A complaint under subsection (1) shall be filed in writing not later than 15 business days

(a) after the applicant is notified of the decision of the head of the public body, or the date of the act or failure to act; or

(b) after the date the head of the public body is considered to have refused the request under subsection 16(2).

(3) A third party informed under section 19 of a decision of the head of a public body to grant access to a record or part of a record in response to a request may file a complaint with the commissioner respecting that decision.

(4) A complaint under subsection (3) shall be filed in writing not later than 15 business days after the third party is informed of the decision of the head of the public body.

(5) The commissioner may allow a longer time period for the filing of a complaint under this section.

(6) A person or third party who has appealed directly to the Trial Division under subsection 52(1) or 53(1) shall not file a complaint with the commissioner.

(7) The commissioner shall refuse to investigate a complaint where an appeal has been commenced in the Trial Division.

(8) A complaint shall not be filed under this section with respect to

(a) a request that is disregarded under section 21;

(b) a decision respecting an extension of time under section 23;

(c) a variation of a procedure under section 24; or

(d) an estimate of costs or a decision not to waive a cost under section 26.

(9) The commissioner shall provide a copy of the complaint to the head of the public body concerned.
Direct appeal to Trial Division by an applicant

52. (1) Where an applicant has made a request to a public body for access to a record or correction of personal information and has not filed a complaint with the commissioner under section 42, the applicant may appeal the decision, act or failure to act of the head of the public body that relates to the request directly to the Trial Division.

(2) An appeal shall be commenced under subsection (1) not later than 15 business days

(a) after the applicant is notified of the decision of the head of the public body, or the date of the act or failure to act; or

(b) after the date the head of the public body is considered to have refused the request under subsection 16(2).

(3) Where an applicant has filed a complaint with the commissioner under section 42 and the commissioner has refused to investigate the complaint, the applicant may commence an appeal in the Trial Division of the decision, act or failure to act of the head of the public body that relates to the request for access to a record or for correction of personal information.

(4) An appeal shall be commenced under subsection (3) not later than 15 business days after the applicant is notified of the commissioner’s refusal under subsection 45(2).
Title: Second Meeting of the Minister’s Committee on Violence against Women and Girls

Issue: To provide information respecting the second meeting of the Minister’s Committee on Violence against Women and Girls.

Background and Current Status:

- On October 18, 2017, the Honourable Andrew Parsons, Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General, announced an initiative to help make Newfoundland and Labrador a safer place for women and girls through the establishment of a Minister’s Committee on Violence against Women and Girls.

- Minister Parsons, alongside Linda Ross, former President of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, co-chair the Committee. The Committee represents a diverse group, including women’s organizations, Indigenous governments and organizations, Victim Services, RNC, RCMP, Adult Probation, Provincial Crown, CSSD, WPO, IIAS, members of the legal community, community organizations, individuals with lived experience and others who have experience and knowledge of issues surrounding violence against women and girls. The goal is to share information, exchange ideas, and develop actions in support of an end to gender-based violence in Newfoundland and Labrador.

- The Committee held its first meeting on December 8, 2017, at the Easter Seals House in St. John’s. Invitations for Committee membership were widely distributed to diverse stakeholders. Approximately 75 invitations were extended; a total of 56 individuals, including representatives of community stakeholders and government departments, accepted the invitation to sit on the Committee and participated in the December 2017 meeting. Participants engaged in facilitated discussions identifying and discussing areas that require change to end violence against women and girls, challenges and solutions to ending violence, and the various roles of organizations and individuals in implementing solutions.

- Due to significant interest in the Committee, in early 2018, Minister Parsons and Ms. Ross selected a sub-group of the participants who had met on December 8, 2017 to form a Steering Committee. Current Steering Committee membership includes persons with lived experience, the Women’s Policy Office, RNC, RCMP, Public Prosecutions, Violence Prevention Avalon East, Stella’s Circle, NL Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, Public Legal Information Association of NL and First Light.

- The Steering Committee has met seven times since its formation, up to and including the last meeting on December 13, 2018, and has decided to hold a second meeting with the Committee members who met in December 2017. The Steering Committee has scheduled the second Committee meeting for February 13, 2019.

- All 2017 Committee members will be invited to attend the February 13, 2019 meeting, as well as other relevant stakeholders identified by the Steering Committee.

- The Committee meeting is planned in concert with the annual meeting of the Violence Prevention Newfoundland and Labrador organizations on February 13-15, 2019 in St. John’s, as well as
Violence Prevention Month. The representatives of these organizations will also be invited to the Committee meeting.

- The Public Engagement Division of the Communications and Public Engagement Branch (CPEB) Engagement facilitated the December 2017 Committee meeting and will also facilitate the February 13, 2019 Committee meeting.

**Analysis:**

- Feedback after the December 2017 Committee meeting was predominantly positive, noting that it was a well-organized event for a diverse group of people. The participants were hopeful that action would be taken to help end violence against women and girls. It is important to bring the Committee together again to discuss the progress to date, determine action priorities for 2019, and to continue the positive dialogue with the full Committee.

- There was some negative feedback following the December 2017 event; some stakeholders (i.e. the St. John’s Status of Women Council, which declined the invitation to participate) were critical and publically remarked that this province has seen multiple committees and violence prevention strategies yet violence against women is on the rise in NL. Similar criticism could arise again following the second meeting of the full Committee.

- Total costs for the February Committee meeting are estimated at $5,000 (venue rental, food etc.) which will be absorbed within JPS’s existing budget allocations.

**Action Being Taken:**

- Planning for the second Committee meeting on February 13, 2019 is underway. JPS has obtained quotes for a venue and is finalizing a list of invitees. Invitations are expected to be sent to stakeholders by-mid January.

- A media advisory is planned and a news release is anticipated. Committee members will be made available to media upon request.

**Prepared/Approved by:** J. Lovas/M. Collins/J. Mercer, Q.C.

**Reviewed by:** C. Osmond/K. Stone, Cabinet Secretariat

**Ministerial Approval:** Received from Honourable Andrew Parsons, Q.C.

January 10, 2019

**Cabinet Secretariat**

- The Minister’s Committee on Violence Against Women and Girls released a Progress Report on its work in October, 2018. It outlines community initiatives to prevent and address violence against women and girls, and outlines next steps which include ensuring initiatives are communicated to community stakeholders and continued work in identifying service gaps. The Report can be accessed at [https://www.justice.gov.nl.ca/just/pdf/Steering_Committee_VAWG_Report.pdf](https://www.justice.gov.nl.ca/just/pdf/Steering_Committee_VAWG_Report.pdf)

- The Committee plans to develop a priority setting document in 2019 to guide next steps.