



**Ministry of Children's Services' Response to the
Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
18-Year-Old Peter: An Investigative Review**

August 2017

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Background

In October 2014, a young man was a victim of homicide in his home community. The young man was not receiving child intervention services at the time of his death; however, he had received services within the two years preceding his death. Our thoughts are with this young man's immediate and extended family, friends, and community as they continue to mourn his loss.

As described in the Advocate's report, this young man was the subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order before his 18th birthday. He suffered numerous losses within his family, which resulted in many moves and caregivers over time. He showed tremendous resilience throughout this period. When he turned 18, he declined continued supports and services from Child and Family Services.

On March 14, 2017, the Advocate released an investigative review report entitled *18-Year-Old Peter: An Investigative Review* (the report). The report makes one recommendation regarding the consistent implementation of transition policies.

The ministry's response includes information gathered from:

- a review of existing policies in comparison to issues identified in the report;
- a review of current ministry initiatives, practice, and program directions related to issues identified in the report; and
- a review of current measures and methods to assess fidelity of practice expectations.

Transitioning into adulthood is a challenging time for all young people, but the challenges faced by young people leaving the child intervention system can be even greater. We continue to adapt our practices to support at-risk youth with complex needs to transition into healthy, successful adulthood.

Evidence-based child intervention casework practice in Alberta continues to evolve and incorporate new feedback and inputs from a variety of sources including external reviews; research into leading practices; experiences of service delivery staff; and analysis of outcomes for children, youth, and families receiving services. Effective and efficient services for youth and young persons are critical to supporting healthy transitions to independence and adulthood.

Response to Recommendation

Recommendation:

The Ministry of Children's Services should ensure that policies regarding transitioning youth out of care are fully understood and implemented. The Ministry must provide information that demonstrates how these policies are implemented consistently across the province.

Ministry response: The ministry accepts the recommendation.

As noted by the Advocate in his report, the ministry has adequate policies in place to support transition planning. However, recognizing the unique challenges faced by young people leaving the child intervention system we continue to adapt our practices to support at-risk youth with complex needs to transition into healthy, successful adulthood.

The ministry continues to improve service delivery with the ongoing implementation of the Child intervention Practice Framework and associated practice strategies, such as Lifelong Connections. The Lifelong Connections practice strategy recognizes the importance of building meaningful lifelong connections and relationships for children and youth within their family and community. As part of the strategy, front-line service delivery staff are provided tools to support youth to transition into adulthood with a strong sense of self and a network of stable supports. As the implementation of practice strategies evolve, policy and standards will be updated to reflect and measure the practice shifts.

Conclusion

Peter showed resilience in the face of repeated trauma and loss. Understanding and responding to this kind of trauma is a critical part of success in the work of Children's Services. That's why we will continue to implement evidence-informed practice strategies along with collaborative and innovative solutions to meet the needs of vulnerable Albertans including youth transitioning into adulthood. Through our ongoing evolution, we strive for the development of a system that helps children, youth, and families reach their full potential, now and in the future.