

# INFORMATION NOTE

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**Title:** Covid-19 Seniors' Working Group Update

**Date Prepared:** September 9, 2020

**Report To:** His Worship the Mayor and Members of Council

**Councillor and Role:** Councillor Deanne Stapleton

**Ward:** Ward 1

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## **Issue: Vulnerable Population- Seniors Working Group**

### **Discussion – Background and Current Status:**

The province had established a Vulnerable Populations Task Group back in May consisting of several working groups looking at various issues from housing to food security to help during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Robyn Dobbin represented the Seniors Advisory Committee on this Seniors working group and continues to receive and forward relevant information to members of the Seniors Advisory Committee.

Meetings have concluded but feedback was given by members of the Seniors Working Group back in August through a Vulnerable Populations Task Group Questionnaire. Below are a few of the questions asked of members:

1. What do you see as the key accomplishment(s) of your working group during the COVID-19 Response?

Identification of systemic issues that have emerged or been highlighted because of COVID-19. Some issues can be managed effectively through emergency response (food security, dispensing fees). However, many of these issues will require broader policy and program development moving forward. This includes the digital divide that adds to social isolation, the financial security, and overall health of older adults.

2. What gaps still exist in the COVID-19 response to support vulnerable populations?

The focus on on-line communications, particularly through social media makes it more challenging for vulnerable populations to access accurate information from trusted sources. The digital divide and financial challenges faced by vulnerable populations are the significant gaps identified by the working group. Finally, the importance access to daily services and supports for seniors and vulnerable persons remains an issue.

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3. What initiatives/solutions are key to addressing these gaps?

- Research to identify the roots of issues (what is the role for ARC - NL, NLCHI, and NLCAHR)
- Incorporation of vulnerable persons into government communication strategies. Low-tech/no-tech approach needs to be used to reach some of these groups
- Knowledge mobilization

**Key Considerations/Implications:**

1. Budget/Financial Implications:

- N/A

2. Partners or Other Stakeholders:

- SeniorsNL
- NL 50+ Federation
- Connections for Seniors
- Seniors' Coalition
- United Way
- Members of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors
- NL Seniors' Advocate
- Seniors and Aging division staff from CSSD (Children, Seniors and Social Development)
- The Town of Conception Bay South

3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans:

- A Connected City-A city where people feel connected, have a sense of belonging, and are actively engaged in community life
- An Effective City-A City that performs effectively and delivers results

4. Legal or Policy Implications:

- a. N/A

5. Privacy Implications:

- a. N/A

6. Engagement and Communications Considerations:
  - a. Continue to inform City of St. John's Communications team of information provided by the Government of NL that would pertain to the senior population.
7. Human Resource Implications:
  - a. N/A
8. Procurement Implications:
  - a. N/A
9. Information Technology Implications:
  - a. N/A
10. Other Implications:
  - a. N/A

**Conclusion/Next Steps:**

Continue to inform SAC members and City of St. John's Communications Division of most relevant information shared from Government of NL and other group contacts

### Report Approval Details

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Attachments:	
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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Karen Sherriffs - Sep 10, 2020 - 12:30 PM**

**Tanya Haywood - Sep 10, 2020 - 12:48 PM**