



**GN Response to the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts' *Report on the Review of the 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Annual Reports of Nunavut's Representative for Children and Youth***

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## Introduction

The Annual Reports of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) for 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 (Annual Reports) were tabled in the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut on November 19, 2021, October 26, 2022, and October 19, 2023, respectively.

The Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held its televised hearing on the Annual Reports from April 22-23, 2024. The hearing was held in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly and televised live across the territory. The hearing was also open to the public and news media and was livestreamed on the Legislative Assembly's website. Transcripts from the hearing are available on the Legislative Assembly's website.

On May 28, 2024, the Chair of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts presented the report on their review of the Annual Reports of Nunavut's Representative for Children and Youth.

This document is the response to the report requested by the Chair pursuant to Rule 91(5) of the *Rules of the Legislative Assembly*.

## Standing Committee Recommendation #2:

*That the departments of Education, Family Services, Health and Justice continue to collaborate with the Representative for Children and Youth to ensure that requests for information and data reports align more closely with the way data is collected at the departmental level and to include any additional data that may be relevant to the work of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth.*

## GN Response:

The Government of Nunavut (GN), including the departments of Education, Family Services, Health, and Justice (the departments), will continue to cooperate and collaborate with the RCY on requests for information.

The departments have engaged directly with the RCY and reached agreements regarding data requests to help ensure the information collected and presented in the RCY's annual reports are relevant to its work.

Departments have noted the increasingly detailed and expansive requests for information from the RCY. It is important to recognize the time commitments involved in fulfilling these requests and to evaluate the usefulness of the information being sought.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the RCY to align our data collection methods and ensure that all relevant information is included to support the needs of children and youth in Nunavut.

## **Standing Committee Recommendation #4:**

*That the Government of Nunavut improve the timeliness of its responses to communications from the Representative of Children and Youth.*

### **GN Response:**

The GN understands the need for prompt and efficient communication with the RCY to ensure the best outcomes for children and youth in Nunavut.

The GN makes every effort to meet the RCY's timelines for information requests. While the departments strive to meet deadlines consistently, there have been instances where complex data requests and capacity necessitated a request for an extension. Further, when a department is unable to meet a deadline, we make it a priority to communicate with the RCY promptly to explain the situation and request additional time to respond to specific requests.

The departments acknowledge that meeting RCY response timelines can be a challenge due to capacity, staff transitions and temporary acting assignments. However, departments have worked to improve respective reporting processes and relationships with the RCY, leading to more timely and accurate responses.

The GN recognizes the importance of effective communication with the RCY and is aware of some of the communication challenges. Departments have worked diligently to build the capacity of frontline staff to work closely with the RCY staff in a collaborative way. Departments acknowledge this was a challenge following the establishment of the RCY office in 2015.

There are opportunities to continue to strengthen the connection with frontline staff and RCY staff to ensure issues are addressed efficiently, without necessitating the intervention of the RCY and deputy heads.

By maintaining open and transparent communication, we aim to ensure that any potential delays are communicated promptly and resolved efficiently, as we work together to support the needs of children and youth in Nunavut.

## **Standing Committee Recommendation #5:**

*That the Department of Family Services finalize its Strategic Action Plan without any further delay, implement its new Matrix case management system as soon as possible and ensure that its standards, policies and practices are up-to-date and effective in providing protection and support to Nunavut children and youth.*

### **GN Response:**

Thank you for your recommendation regarding the finalization and implementation of the Department of Family Services' Strategic Action Plan and the Matrix case management system. We appreciate your commitment to ensuring the protection and support of children and youth in Nunavut.

The Department of Family Services is in the final stages of completing the Ilagiitsiarniq - Family Wellness Strategic Plan. We have actively engaged Nunavummiut through community engagement sessions and surveys to ensure their full participation in the development phase. The Department received 264 survey responses from 21 communities. In addition, Family Services held stakeholder meetings with 104 participants and public consultations in Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet, Kugluktuk, Iqaluit, Qikiqtarjuaq, and Cambridge Bay, with a total of 248 participants. These engagements will be instrumental in shaping programs and services that reflect the needs of our communities. We are also working closely with the RCY and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) to ensure a comprehensive plan. We expect the plan to be finalized by Fall 2024.

Additionally, the Matrix Solution has been launched and has been implemented across the territory. This new case management system is designed to enhance our standards, policies, and practices, ensuring they are effective in providing protection and support to Nunavut children and youth. We anticipate tabling a progress report in the Legislative Assembly in October 2024 to update on its implementation.

### **Standing Committee Recommendation #7:**

*That the Government of Nunavut immediately develop a government- wide action plan to address child sexual abuse and sexual violence in Nunavut.*

### **GN Response:**

The GN shares your concern for the safety and well-being of children in our communities. The Government of Nunavut will begin work on a government-wide action plan in line with the Standing Committee's recommendation. An interdepartmental and interagency approach is essential to identify a wide range of collaborative efforts within the government-wide action plan. This approach ensures that all relevant stakeholders are involved and that we leverage our collective resources and expertise effectively.

The GN is committed to working closely with partners to address the root causes and effects of child sexual abuse and violence. Our goal is to create a safer environment for all children in Nunavut and we are ready to collaborate with key partners to tackle this critical issue.