



Message from the Advocate

As the crisp fall air settles in across Newfoundland and Labrador and the leaves begin to change, it's hard not to appreciate the rhythm of the seasons and the opportunity that each new season brings to pause, reflect and look ahead.

It has been a busy summer at the Office of the Seniors' Advocate. We continued to listen, connect and advocate on issues that matter to seniors and their families. Through ongoing public engagement, we connected with seniors, caregivers, healthcare professionals, community organizations, government officials and the other provincial Seniors' Advocates, helping us better understand the experiences of seniors and the challenges they face.

Our advocacy was also strengthened through several important submissions and formal correspondence, bringing the voices and lived experiences of seniors directly to decision-makers. This summer, we provided input on public safety and policing, and the Poverty Reduction and Prevention Strategy. We raised concerns, offered considerations and called for meaningful improvements to policies, programs and services that impact seniors in NL. These submissions are an important part of our role in ensuring seniors' perspectives are heard and considered in decisions that affect their lives.

Thank you to everyone who continues to share experiences and perspectives with us. Your voices help shape our advocacy and ensure that the issues affecting seniors remain at the forefront. There is much more work ahead, and we look forward to continuing it together this fall.



Pamela

Pamela Dawe
Seniors' Advocate NL (Acting)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Two New Submissions
- A New Face at the OSA
- Social Connections: What the Research Tells Us



Office of the

SENIORS' ADVOCATE

Newfoundland and Labrador

Advocacy Actions

Issue	OSA Action	Response
Public Safety and Policing: Seniors' Perspectives	In response to an invitation requesting input on public safety legislation, the OSA provided a written submission to the Policing Transformation Working Group and the Policy and Public Safety Division. The OSA highlighted opportunities for improvement, including education for police and other personnel on the unique experiences and vulnerabilities of seniors; community education on violence prevention, frauds, scams and abuse; training on dementia and other age-related conditions; education on Emergency Protection Orders; and increased police presence in communities.	The OSA looks forward to learning about the final conclusions of the Working Group and will continue to advocate for public safety approaches that recognize the unique experiences and needs of seniors.



Issue	OSA Action	Response
Access to Home Support for Seniors Residing in Shelters	The OSA contacted the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation regarding reports that seniors residing in shelters who require home support services may no longer be permitted to receive those supports. The OSA requested clarification on whether such a policy or directive exists and raised concerns about the potential impact, including hospitalizations and a lack of safe housing options for seniors with care needs.	The OSA is continuing this conversation along with other concerns that have arisen. The OSA will continue to seek clarification and advocate for appropriate health, housing and support services for seniors.

Issue

OSA Action

Response

Recognizing Senior Poverty in the Poverty Reduction and Prevention Strategy

The OSA provided input to the Department of Social Supports and Well-Being as part of the development of Newfoundland and Labrador's 10-Year Poverty Reduction and Prevention Strategy. The OSA emphasized that an effective poverty reduction strategy must recognize the realities of poverty and financial insecurity among seniors. The submission highlighted that seniors may experience poverty in ways that are not always captured by traditional measures, including being unable to afford adequate heat, food, prescriptions, home repairs, transportation or the supports needed to remain safely at home. The OSA urged government to make seniors a clear and measurable priority within the strategy and to address not only income, but also the costs and supports required for seniors to live safely, independently and with dignity.

The OSA will continue to monitor the development of the strategy and advocate for approaches that recognize senior poverty and ensure seniors have the resources and supports needed to age safely, independently and with dignity.

Issue

OSA Action

Response

Engagement with Newly Appointed Ministers

The OSA contacted the newly appointed Ministers responsible for Health and Community Services and Social Supports and Well-Being to request introductory meetings. The meetings will provide an opportunity to highlight key concerns affecting seniors and discuss areas where improvements to programs, services and supports are needed.

The OSA looks forward to establishing ongoing dialogue with both Ministers. The OSA will continue to bring forward concerns heard from seniors, families and stakeholders and advocate for improvements across the province.



Read our Latest Submissions!



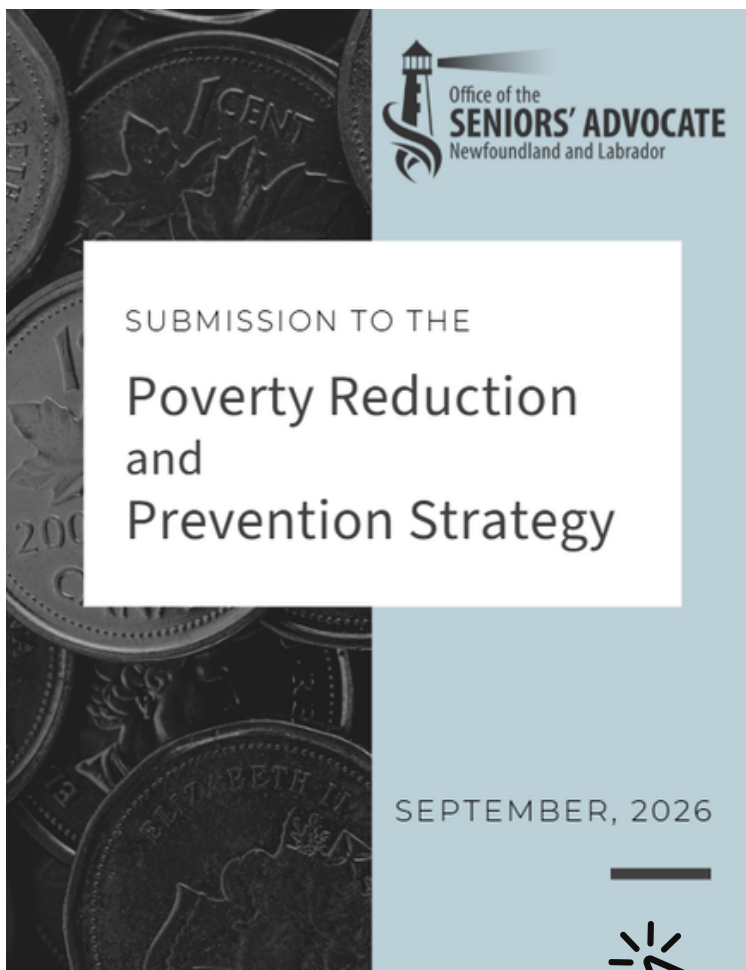
The OSA continues to bring the voices and experiences of seniors forward on issues that matter.



SUBMISSION TO THE

Policing Transformation Working Group and Policing and Public Safety Division

SEPTEMBER 1, 2026



SUBMISSION TO THE

Poverty Reduction and Prevention Strategy

SEPTEMBER, 2026



Seniors' Perspectives on Public Safety

Our submission to the Policing Transformation Working Group highlights opportunities to improve safety, policing and protections for seniors.

Recognizing Senior Poverty

Our submission to the Poverty Reduction and Prevention Strategy highlights the realities of financial insecurity among seniors.

Social Connections Among Older Adults in NL

Social connection is an important part of health and wellbeing particularly among older adults.*

Meaningful relationships enhance wellbeing, improve quality of life, support healthy aging, and help us thrive.

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate conducted an anonymous online survey of adults aged 55 and older throughout Newfoundland and Labrador to better understand social connections, loneliness, and factors associated with these experiences.

Respondents represented all health zones, urban and rural communities, a range of age groups and income levels, Indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities.

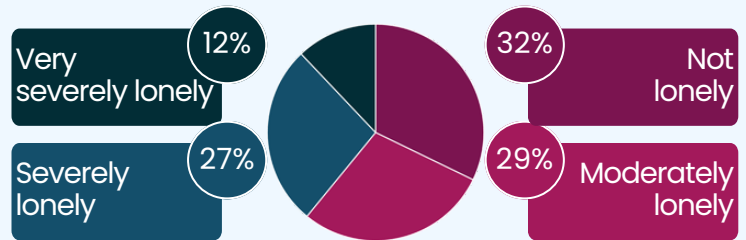
Loneliness

Loneliness is the feeling of having less social connection than desired.

68% of respondents experienced some degree of loneliness.

32% of respondents did not feel lonely, 12% had very high feelings of loneliness and the rest are in between. The finding that more than two-thirds of respondents experienced some degree of loneliness highlights the importance of strengthening opportunities for social connection among older adults in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Loneliness Level



Higher levels of loneliness were associated with:

-  Less frequent participation in social activities.
-  Feeling that loneliness is beyond personal control.
-  More stressful life events.
-  Lower income and rural residence.
-  Physical, sensory, cognitive, and mental health challenges.



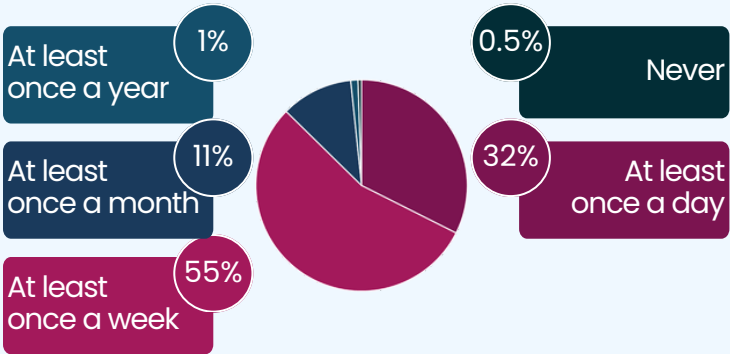
* World Health Organization (2025). From loneliness to social connection: charting a path to healthier societies: report of the WHO Commission on Social Connection. World Health Organization.
<https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/381746>.

Social Participation

Respondents reported participating in a variety of social activities with different frequencies, from never to every day.

87% of respondents participate in social activities once a week or more often.

Social Activity Frequency

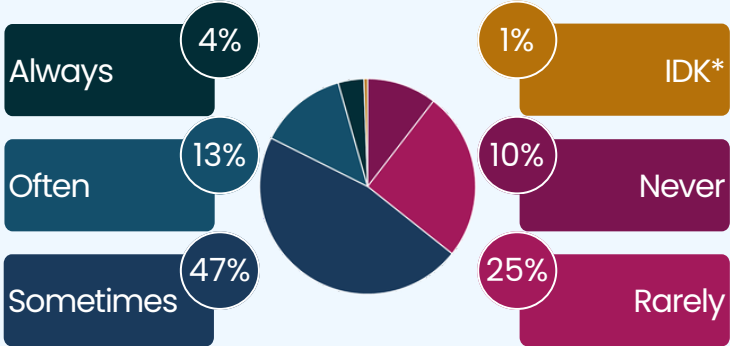


Desire to Participate More

64% of respondents wanted to participate in more activities at least sometimes.

Many respondents wanted to participate in more social activities.

Wanted to Participate in More Activities



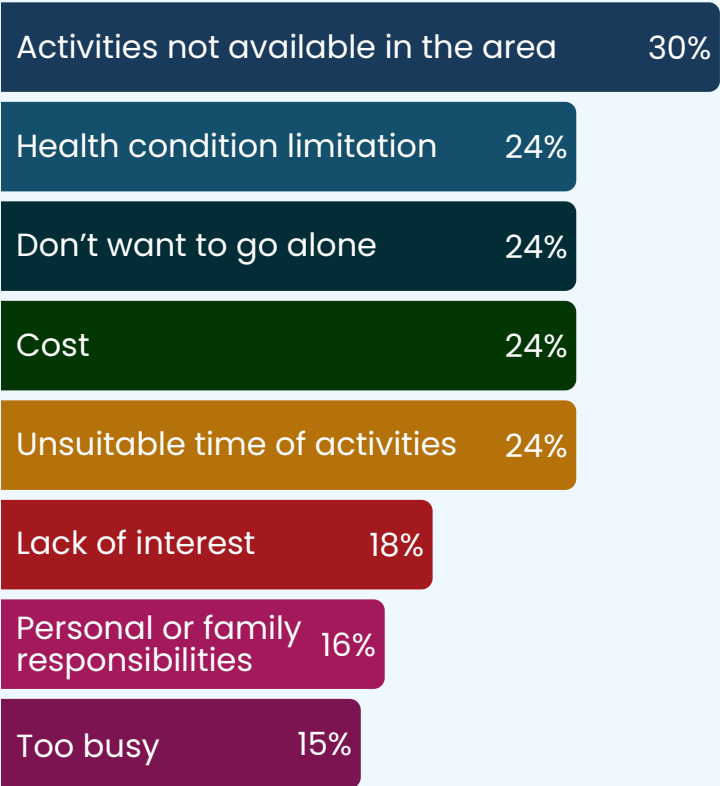
*I don't know or prefer not to answer

Participation Barriers

30% of respondents reported activities were not available in their area as a barrier to participate.

In general, respondents who experienced more participation barriers tended to report higher levels of loneliness.

Participation Barriers



Multiple answers allowed.

In general, respondents who experienced more participation barriers tended to report higher levels of loneliness.

This suggests that improving access to activities and reducing barriers could help strengthen social connections and reduce loneliness.

Summary

Social connections are more than a social benefit. Keeping social connections as a priority is important. Having the desired amount of social connections makes us feel better, can enhance our quality of life, foster a sense of belonging, and support healthy aging. While many older adults in Newfoundland and Labrador regularly participate in social activities, many also experience loneliness and face barriers that limit participation. Supporting opportunities for meaningful social participation and reducing barriers such as availability, cost, health limitations, and transportation can help strengthen social connections.



Meet Our Newest Staff Member

Danny Barrett

Danny Barrett is our newest Systemic Advocacy Consultant. Danny has worked with the Provincial Government since 2001 within the Departments of Health and Community Services, Digital Governance and Service NL, and Children, Seniors and Social Development. Danny received a Public Service Award of Excellence individually in 2011 and as part of a group with the Department of Health and Community Services in 2021.

Danny holds both a Bachelors and Masters Degree in Social Work from Memorial University of NL and is a fellow of the School of Graduate Studies. His main areas of interest include seniors' issues, disability issues, and mental health and addictions. Danny has volunteered with several organizations over the years. In 2018, he received a Century of Change Award and the Holly Award from CNIB in recognition of his contribution in Newfoundland and Labrador. In his spare time, Danny likes to read, do work around his home, hike, and spend time with his wife, Nancy, and their fur-baby, Darci.

Public Engagement

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate continued to strengthen relationships and engage with organizations, service providers and stakeholders to better understand the experiences and concerns of seniors across Newfoundland and Labrador and beyond.

- The OSA met with Canada's Chief Accessibility Officer, Stephanie Cadieux, and Senior Policy Analyst, Kathryn Asher. Many areas of common interest were discussed in this introductory meeting including the shared desire for an accessible, barrier-free Canada.
- The Advocate met with two of the provincial Seniors' Advocates from Canada to exchange information and learn from the experiences of other offices.
- The OSA met with staff from a variety of Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services divisions and areas to discuss concerns affecting seniors. These conversations provided an opportunity to hear directly from those working on the front lines, better understand challenges within the system and identify areas where seniors may be experiencing gaps in services or supports.
- The OSA met with Caregivers Nova Scotia and Caregivers New Brunswick to discuss the experiences and challenges of caregivers. Discussions focused on the gaps in supports available to caregivers and what caregiver advocacy looks like across an Atlantic Canadian context.



Town Hall Meetings with the Advocate



The Office of the Seniors' Advocate regularly meets with organizations/groups.

If you would like to arrange a session :



1-833-729-6603



seniorsadvocate@seniorsadvocatenl.ca

The schedule books up quickly, so be sure to reach out as soon as possible!


Caregivers
Nova Scotia
for friends and family giving care


CAREGIVERS NB
PROCHES AIDANTS NB



- The Advocate presented at the 50+ Federal 49th Annual Convention, providing an overview of the role of the Office of the Seniors' Advocate, what it means to be a statutory office, and the upcoming changes to the legislation governing the OSA. The presentation provided an opportunity to increase awareness of the OSA's mandate and the role it plays in advocating for the rights, interests and wellbeing of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador.



Media Interviews

The Advocate spoke with media outlets following the release of the Auditor General's latest report on long term care. The conversations provided an opportunity to discuss the report's findings, highlight issues affecting seniors in long term care, and reinforce the OSA's ongoing advocacy for continuum of care legislation, greater accountability, and appropriate oversight and monitoring.

Read Here

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Our Team

- **Pamela Dawe**, Seniors' Advocate (Acting)
- **Danny Barrett**, Systemic Advocacy Consultant
- **Gabrielle Dupont**, Systemic Advocacy Consultant
- **Ignacia Diaz**, Policy Analyst
- **Arlene Mullins**, Administrative Officer





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