

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

March 28, 2019

Child and Youth Advocate Releases Investigative Report on Surviving Child's Benefits

Child and Youth Advocate Jackie Lake Kavanagh has released a new report ***Surviving Child's Benefits: Who Is Missing Out?*** It concludes that some children of deceased parents in Newfoundland and Labrador do not receive Canada Pension Plan's Surviving Child's Benefit. In some cases, these funds are treated as provincial government revenue and never directly reach these children. And these children are among the most vulnerable – children in care, children whose surviving parent receives Income Support, or youth requiring residential services under the Youth Services Program.

The Canada Pension Plan's Surviving Child's Benefit is part of the national social security system and is intended to provide support to children of deceased contributors. In 2018, the average rate paid to the surviving child was \$244.64 per month. This would double if both parents are deceased. The CPP is covered by contributions and revenue earned on CPP investments. CPP is not funded through tax revenue.

The Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour administers the Income Support Program and treats payments under CPP, such as Surviving Child's Benefits, as family income and deducts the amount from a family's Income Support payment. If the child is in care with the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, the Surviving Child's Benefit goes to government revenue and does not directly support the care of the child or youth. Youth Services allowances and kinship care funds are also reduced by the amount of any Surviving Child's Benefit.

Child and Youth Advocate Jackie Lake Kavanagh states "Every support and benefit for children must be protected and secured when a parent dies. Government's practice of treating these children's benefits from their deceased parent's Canada Pension Plan as revenue requires change." The Advocate thanks families who called her office to identify this issue after she released a related report ***Making Waves: Ensuring Children Benefit from Child Support Payments*** in 2018.

This report can be viewed on the OCYA website: www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate can be reached by calling (1-877) 753-3888, emailing office@ocya.nl.ca and on Twitter @OCYANL

Media Contact:

Wilma MacInnis
Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
(709) 753-3888 wilmamacinnis@ocya.nl.ca