A large, stylized teal leaf graphic with a white outline, positioned on the left side of the page. It partially obscures a background image of a person walking on a sidewalk.

2019/20 -
2021/22



SERVICE PLAN



The Office of the

mbudsperson

B.C.'s Independent Voice For Fairness

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Message from the Ombudsperson

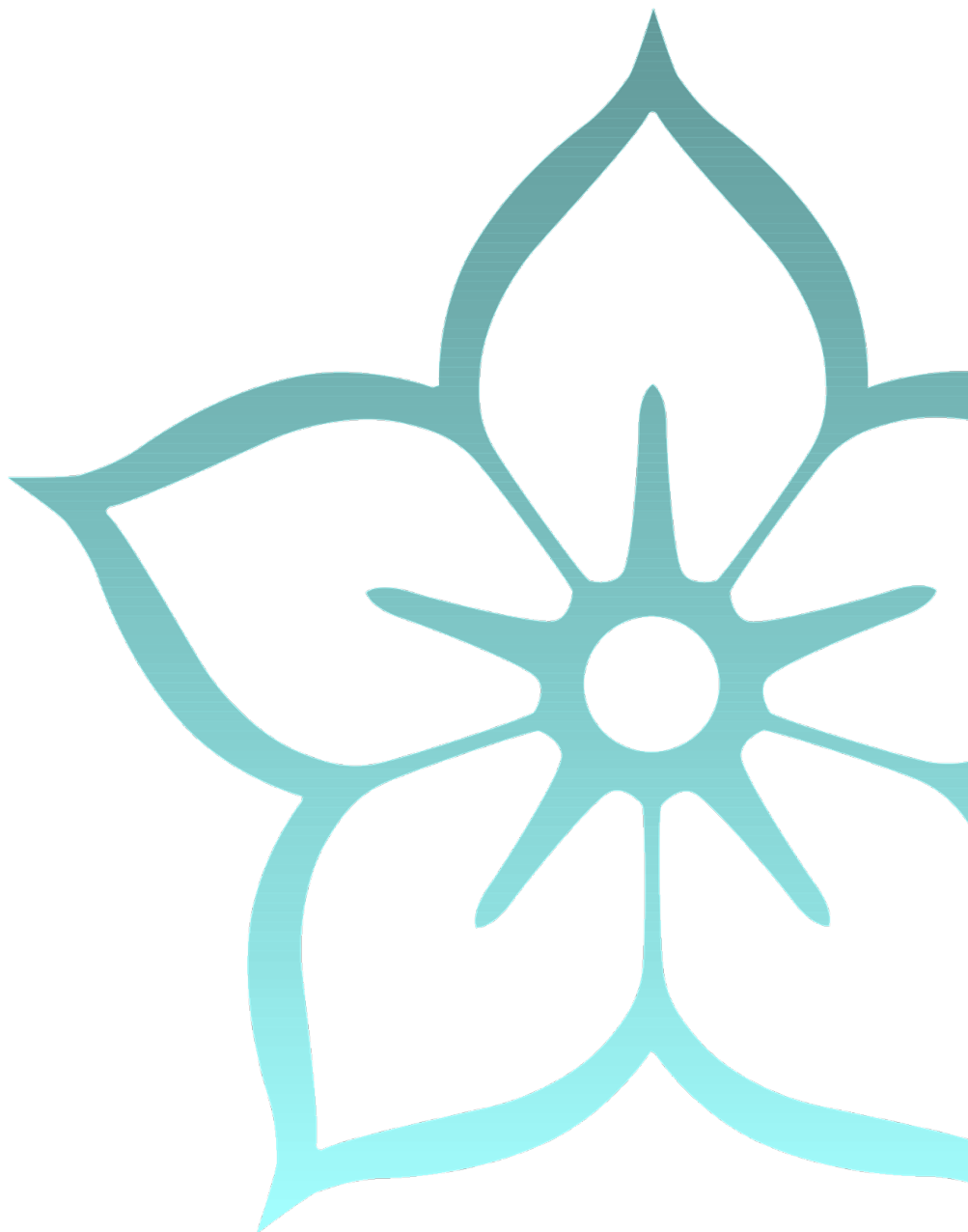
I have the honour to present the 2019/2020-2021/2022 Service Plan for the Office of the Ombudsperson.

Included in this Service Plan is a report on our service performance for 2017/2018; an interim report on progress on 2018/2019 initiatives; and a plan setting out our key priorities and targets for 2019/2020 and beyond.

This Service Plan is the third issued within the strategic framework set out in our 2016-2021 Strategic Plan.



Jay Chalke
Ombudsperson



2016-2021 Strategic Plan: Summary

Our Vision, Mandate and Principles

Our Vision: **British Columbia's Independent Voice for Fairness**

We exist to:

- ensure that the people of British Columbia are treated fairly in the provision of public services
- promote and foster fairness and accountability in public administration
- provide an independent avenue of last resort for individuals with complaints about government services

We deliver our mandate by:

- responding to inquiries from the public
- educating citizens and public authorities on issues of administrative fairness
- conducting thorough, impartial and independent investigations of complaints
- independently initiating investigations of apparent administrative unfairness
- facilitating resolutions of complaints and improvements to the administration of public policy through consultation and recommendations

External Principles

- we are fair and impartial
- we are professional and thorough
- we listen with respect
- we seek resolutions that are principled and practical

Internal Principles

- we respect and support each other as a team
- we are committed to high standards of practice in our work
- we strive continuously to improve our services
- we value the expertise and knowledge of our staff

2016-2021 Strategic Plan: Summary

Our Goals and Objectives

1 People who need us are aware of our services and can access them

- A** Improve accessibility of services
- B** Focus outreach on people most likely to benefit from our services

2 Complaints are addressed efficiently

- A** Process new complaints more effectively
- B** Reduce wait times for files awaiting assignment to investigators
- C** Improve effectiveness and efficiency in concluding individual complaint investigations through supportive policies, tools and training

3 Thorough and impartial investigations promote fair public administration

- A** Increase public reporting
- B** Improve linkage with Legislative Assembly to enhance consideration of tabled reports
- C** Demonstrate influence of investigations in improving public administration

4 Public authorities are supported in improving administration

- A** Increase work with public authorities to improve their dispute resolution processes
- B** Enhance proactive consultations with public authorities about emerging issues relating to their programs
- C** Promote transparency and fair practice among public authorities undergoing program change

5 Staff are recognized for their expertise

- A** Provide ongoing professional learning and development opportunities for staff
- B** Enhance development and retention of operational subject matter knowledge and expertise

2016-2021 Strategic Plan: Summary

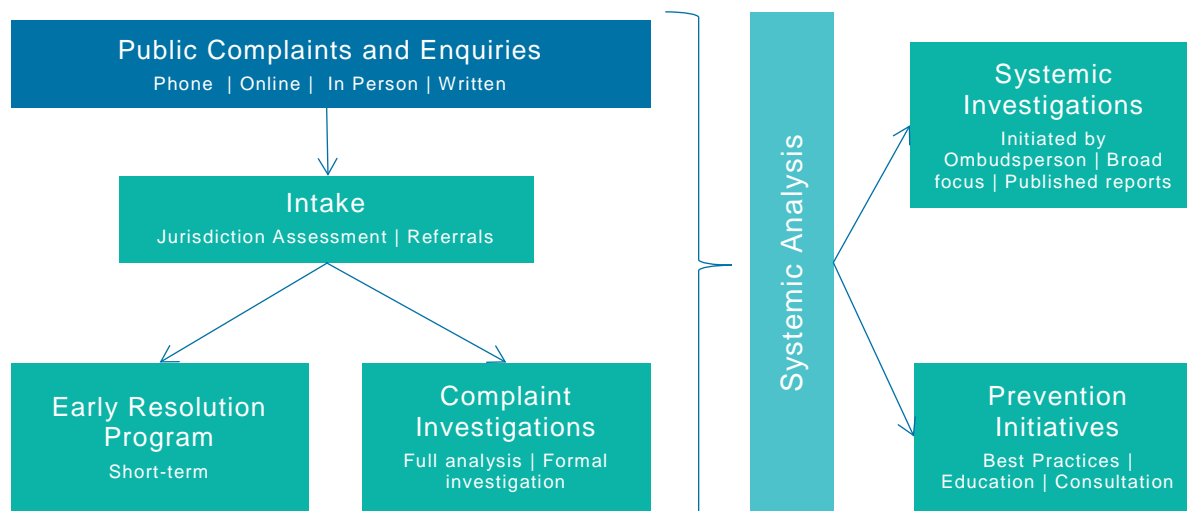
Our Strategies

- 1** Develop a public outreach strategy focused on underserved British Columbians
- 2** Build a model of preventative ombudship focusing on proactive engagement
- 3** Review our internal processes to reduce delays in service
- 4** Renew and improve internal policies and knowledge management framework to enhance service
- 5** Maximize impact by applying a systemic approach wherever possible
- 6** Develop and implement a revised professional and career development framework

How We Do Our Work

Core Operations

Our core operations are carried out through an integrated approach involving the processing of complaints and inquiries from the public at intake, the early resolution program, individual complaint investigations, systemic investigations and prevention initiatives.



Corporate Shared Services

The Office of the Ombudsperson provides support to four Offices of the Legislature through an economical Corporate Shared Services support organization. These shared support services include finance, human resources, facilities and IT services.

2017/18 Performance Measures and Results

2016-2021 Strategic Goal	Performance Indicator	2017/2018 Target	2017/2018 Results
People who need us are aware of our services and can access them	# outreach tours conducted	2	2
	# external presentations delivered on administrative fairness and the role of the Ombudsperson	20	24
Complaints are addressed efficiently	% of non-investigated files concluded within 30 days	90%	90%
	% of investigations concluded within 180 days	80%	79%
Thorough and impartial investigations promote fair public administration	% of investigations settled	30%	38%
	# of investigative/best practices reports released	2	2
Public authorities are supported in improving administration	# presentations to authorities on administrative fairness and the role of the Ombudsperson	20	27
Staff are recognized for their expertise	develop and implement a revised professional and career development framework	100% implementation of final framework	framework implemented in 2017/18; formal policy finalized in 2018/19

2018/19 Interim Report on Performance

2018/2019 marks the middle year of our five-year 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. 2017/18 was a year of transition as our Systemic Investigations program resumed operations following the release of Referral Report No. 1, *Misfire: The 2012 Ministry of Health Employment Terminations and Related Matters*, and our three-year Prevention Initiatives pilot program commenced operations. In 2018/2019 the Systemic Investigations and Prevention Initiatives programs are now fully operational as we enter a further transitional period in preparation for the implementation of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*.

The following summarizes our major accomplishments in 2018/2019 so far, with reference to the 2016-2021 Strategic Goals they contribute to:

1. People who need us are aware of our services and can access them

- Conducted public outreach tour and mobile complaint clinics in Smithers, Hazelton, Terrace, Kitimat and Prince Rupert, with a particular focus on meeting with Indigenous leaders regarding our office's role and how we can assist Indigenous individuals living on and off reserve.
- Established our underserved communities outreach plan and began implementing new outreach initiatives focusing on service to Indigenous communities, youth and isolated seniors.

2. Complaints are addressed efficiently

- Commenced implementation of recommendations under comprehensive investigative process review, which was carried out in 2017/2018.

3. Thorough and impartial investigations promote fair public administration

- Released Special Report No. 40, *Holding Pattern: Call Wait Times for Income and Disability Assistance* on April 17.
- Released Special Report No. 41, *Working Within the Rules: Supporting Employment for Income Assistance Recipients* on May 15.
- Began implementing revised monitoring framework through regular public reporting on implementation of systemic recommendations from past Special and Public Reports. Released public updates on implementation of recommendations made in the following Reports:
 - *Under Inspection: The Hiatus in B.C. Correctional Centre Inspections*
 - *In the Public Interest: Protecting Students Through Effective Oversight of Private Career Training Institutions*
 - *Misfire: The 2012 Ministry of Health Employment*

Terminations and Related Matters

4. Public authorities are supported in improving administration

- Prevention Initiatives program fully operationalized in 2018/19. Program activities to date have included:
 - “Fairness In Practice” workshops for public servants – 26 workshops and presentations attended by 1036 public servants to date.
 - Four webinars on topics related to administrative fairness and the role of the Ombudsperson with 878 total virtual attendees and 1721 subsequent views on YouTube.
 - Publication of “Fairness in Practice” workshop guide and Quick Tips reference documents for public servants on our website.
 - Enhanced quarterly reporting to public authorities with complaint issue tracking data.
 - Ongoing consultation projects with public authorities on program change and complaint handling.
 - Completion of external baseline program evaluation.

5. Staff are recognized for their expertise

- Finalized knowledge management strategy to support all operations and foster efficiency, internal communication and collaboration, strategic analysis, and external relationship-building, following consultation and development phase in 2017/18 and early 2018/19.



Major areas of focus for the remainder of 2018/2019 include:

- Planning for anticipated coming into force of *Public Interest Disclosure Act* in 2019/2020. Key deliverables in 2018/19 include resource assessment, operational policy development, I.T. changes, and regulations support.
- Ongoing reduction of wait times and volume of files awaiting assignment for review by investigative staff.
- Continuation of Prevention Initiatives, including release of online “Fairness 101” training program for public servants, and publication of administrative fairness guide and self-assessment tools for public authorities.
- Completion of current systemic investigation and further implementation of systemic recommendation monitoring framework.
- Continued implementation of underserved communities outreach plan with a focus on relationship-building with

Indigenous communities, youth and isolated seniors.

- Implementation of recommendations from process reviews in Investigations, Intake and Early Resolution programs.
- First phase of implementation of knowledge management strategy with initial focus on organization of operational knowledge and developing processes to support internal communication and collaboration.

2019/20 Priorities and Initiatives

In the fourth year of our five-year Strategic Plan, the Office's operational priorities for 2019/2020 are:

- Implementation of *Public Interest Disclosure Act*.
- Final year of three-year Prevention Initiatives pilot project.

More specific initiatives for 2019/2020 are set out under their related goals below:

1. People who need us are aware of our services and can access them

- Continue to maintain and build on outreach to underserved communities. Focused work will continue in relation to Phase One priority groups (Indigenous individuals, youth, and isolated seniors). Phase Two priorities for targeted outreach will be post-secondary students, LGBTQ2 community members and newcomers to British Columbia.

2. Complaints are addressed efficiently

- Final implementation of recommendations identified under process reviews of Investigations, Intake and Early Resolution programs.

3. Thorough and impartial investigations promote fair public administration

- Ongoing program of systemic investigations, including systemic investigations, recommendation monitoring, and

development of broader long-term systemic investigation strategy.

- The *Public Interest Disclosure Act* is expected to be brought into force in 2019/20. The first phase will apply the Act to provincial government ministries and the Officers of the Legislature (covering approximately 35,000 public servants). Under the new legislation, the Ombudsperson has functions related to the provision of advice, investigation of disclosures and investigation of allegations of reprisal.

4. Public authorities are supported in improving administration

- Conclusion of Prevention Initiatives Pilot Program and, informed by the final evaluation, planning initiated for continued resourcing of prevention initiatives.

5. Staff are recognized for their expertise

- Implementation of initiatives to improve access to, and use of, operational knowledge under Knowledge Management Strategy.

Performance Measurement

The performance measurement table set out below offers high level insight into our operations. It provides information about activities undertaken to advance our strategic goals, the timeliness of our service and the results of our work. The table includes several minor refinements to improve clarity and reflect progress toward our objectives. Over the upcoming year we are working on more substantial improvements to our performance management framework.

Efficient, effective and informative approaches to performance measurement have eluded ombuds offices around the world. One reason is that it is particularly difficult to attribute outcomes to our work. For example, while we may be able to reasonably assess the impact of our actions on an individual complainant, it is much more challenging and may be impossible to determine the number of interactions between the authority and the public that will be improved going forward because of our involvement in the earlier case. We oversee hundreds of complex organizations that operate within a dynamic political, economic, technological and sociological context. Invariably there are multiple factors influencing an authority's actions and attributing an authority's actions solely to our work is often not accurate.

Consequently, to the extent that ombuds offices establish performance measures at all, they commonly default to straightforward measures of productivity and timeliness similar to those we have adopted thus far. While these are not without value, they do not

provide the type of meaningful and informative outcome or impact assessment we want to generate and make available.

We have undergone a series of significant organizational and operational changes over the past few years. We have created a knowledge management framework to improve efficiency. Following process reviews and consultations with authorities, we have made significant changes to our investigation, intake and early resolution programs. We are piloting a new Investigation Coordinator position that will allow us to conduct preliminary work while complaint files are waiting to be assigned to investigators. We are developing new policies, training materials and resources. Our Prevention Initiatives pilot program is well underway and our Public Interest Disclosure program is just beginning. All of these, as they are being implemented, provide opportunities for improved measurement of performance.

We are taking steps to improve on our existing framework. We have learned from the formal evaluation of our Prevention Initiatives pilot program, from consultation with other ombuds offices and from our prior experience developing quality assurance and performance measurement frameworks. Our expectation is that the framework will include outcome measures for all core areas of our operations. Our objective is to go beyond what we can easily measure and report and develop a leading and helpful framework that will allow us to better inform the Committee, public authorities, the public and our staff on matters that are meaningful to

them while enabling us to make more informed management decisions and assess the extent to which we are achieving our goals. Our performance measurement framework will link to our strategic goals but also to other objectives important to the efficient operation of the Ombudsperson's office.

2018/2019 - 2019/2020 Performance Measures Matrix			
2016-2021 Strategic Goal	Performance Indicator	2018/2019 Target	2019/2020 Target
People who need us are aware of our services and can access them	# of outreach tours conducted	2	2
	# of presentations to the public	20	30
Complaints are addressed efficiently	% of non-investigated files concluded within 30 days	90%	90%
	% of investigations concluded within 180 days	80%	80%
Thorough and impartial investigations promote fair public administration	% of investigations settled	30%	30%
	# of investigative/best practices reports released	3	3
Public authorities are supported in improving administration	# of presentations to authorities	30	50
Staff are recognized for their expertise	% of staff who report feeling supported in their work-related learning and development	75%	90% - to be assessed in 2020/2021 in conjunction with bi-annual Workplace Environment Survey
	# of requests from authorities and other organizations for training or assistance	20	35

2020/21 and 2021/22 Strategic Direction

2020/21

2020/2021 marks the final year of our five-year Strategic Plan. As a result, our focus will be on evaluating our progress and the significant developments over the previous five years, consulting with stakeholders – including the general public, targeted underserved communities, legislators, public authorities, and our staff – and establishing a new vision and roadmap for the Office of the Ombudsperson in 2021/2022-2025/2026.

Phase Two of the implementation of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* will take place in 2020/21 as coverage of the Act is expanded to cover further government bodies.

2021/22

2021/2022 will focus on laying the groundwork for implementation of the strategies established under our next five-year Strategic Plan.

Phase Three of the implementation of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* will take place in 2021/22 as coverage of the Act is again expanded to cover further government bodies.

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