



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**Ministry of Social Development and Family Services**



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Sunday, 26 October 2020

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Priority: HIGH**

#### **Minister of Social Development and Family Services reaches out to Seniors at Diego Martin Home**

*Sunday October 25, 2020* --- Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, earlier today, paid a visit to a Home for the Aged located at School Street, St Lucien Drive, Diego Martin, following recent complaints, which are in the public domain, via video footage; of alleged neglect.

Following reports made by the West End Police Station on October 23, 2020, the Ministry was informed that a call was made by a concerned neighbour who expressed that she had not seen a worker for the past few days and that a male resident was asking for help. The resident who identified himself as Mr. Wajid Ali-Dookie, indicated that he had not eaten and was left alone most of the time. Wajid-Ali further shared that there were two (2) other persons at the Home: a bedridden female and a female in a wheelchair.

According to the Minister: “When the Ministry was made aware of this situation, contacts were made to the TTPS to verify the allegations. Based on the reports provided by the TTPS, the Ministry realised that there was need for a response by the Division of Ageing which has the mandate of investigating complaints of neglect or abuse to older persons”.

“I am here today on a fact finding mission and to follow up on the report which was provided by the Division of Ageing and the TTPS; particularly as the Ministry has a mandate to craft legislation and policy on how we meet and treat with our Senior Citizens”.

Minister Cox indicated that the Division of Ageing will continue to work with the Home in question towards regularization to ensure that the elderly receive the adequate care and protection they deserve. The Ministry is also at present, developing the Homes for Older Persons Manual and working towards having the Legislation proclaimed.

Accompanying the Minister on the visit were Chief Technical Officer at the Ministry, Mr Michael Reid, Director of the Division of Ageing, Dr Hyacinth Blake and Inspectors attached to her Division as well as Ms Juanice Awai-Payson of the Ministry of Health. Officers of the West End Police Division were also present at the visit.

Minister Cox also took the opportunity to chat with Mr Ali-Dookie who was featured in the viral video.



*IMG. 1 - Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox accompanied by staff of the Division of Ageing and a representative from the Ministry of Health pay a visit to the Seniors Home in Diego Martin.*



*IMG 2 - Minister Cox accompanied by staff of the Division of Ageing Health pays a visit to the Seniors Home in Diego Martin today.*



*IMG 3 - Minister Cox chats with Mr Wajid Ali-Dookie.*

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**For more information:**

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