



November 7, 2018

Re: Members of Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Dear Members

We understand that the Committee is conducting a study on the network of shelters and transition houses serving women and children affected by violence against women and intimate partner violence and that, it will examine:

- the current gap between the need for, and available beds in shelters and transition houses;
- current federal programs and funding in support of shelters and transition houses; and
- possible solutions to address the gap between need and supply.

On behalf of Willow Place Inc., I feel honoured to mention that Willow Place Inc., is the largest, **38 bed** shelter house located in the province of Manitoba. We take pride in serving a diverse population of women and children that are frequently high need and vulnerable families. We primarily serve women and their children fleeing violence, single women fleeing violence and women who have experienced sexualized violence. We understand that domestic/family violence is one of the key pathways that women enter homelessness, as a result of this issue, we serve this population as well. Last year, we served **865** women and children.

It is our understanding that shelters and transition houses do not have equitable funding across the provinces and territories. For us, we have not had an increase in funding in over 10 years. The work we do is imperative; the lives of women and children are literally at stake. We provide more than just safe shelter from abuse, which is also important. As per the research, in Canada, a woman is killed by her partner or former partner every 6 days. In addition to ensuring the safety of women and children, we also offer programming such as counselling (residential and outreach), advocacy, referral to support services, a healthy living program and children's programming.

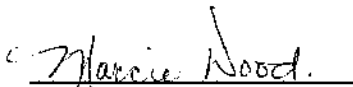
We are writing with the following recommendations:

- Given that violence against women is at an epidemic level, shelters and transition houses serving women and children affected by violence against women must be recognized as an essential service.
- Shelters and transition houses are currently grossly under-funded. We recommend a significant increase in core and sustainable funding. This funding should increase the number of beds and shelters available but must also cover staffing and service provision. Building a shelter without providing for its staffing is not helpful.
- We support Women's Shelters Canada's call for a National Action Plan. The Government of Canada should develop a National Action Plan in line with the United Nations recommendations.

This National Action Plan, like the National Housing Strategy, should cover the Federal government as well as provincial/territorial governments. In Canada in 2018, every woman should have access to comparable services no matter where she lives.

We would be honoured to host the visit of Committee member(s) at Willow Place or to connect with them by phone should they have any questions or require any clarifications about the work we do.

Sincerely,


Marcie Wood
Marcie Wood
Interim Executive Director
Willow Place Inc.