



5 November 2018

Dear Members of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women,

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.

I am writing from Three Oaks Foundation. We are a 16 bed, single staffed shelter/transition house located in Belleville, ON serving all of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties. We primarily serve women and their children and single women fleeing domestic violence however we also provide service to women who are experiencing homelessness due to domestic violence and victims of human trafficking. Last year, we served 274 and 95 children, even though we are only funded to provide service to 130 women and 65 children. We had to turn away 100 additional women due to lack of space.

As well as providing our shelter, we also provide second stage housing which does not receive ongoing funding from any source.

It is our understanding that shelters and transition houses do not have equitable funding across the provinces and territories. Although we did receive some funding within the past year, it fell short by over \$100,000 as to the real costs. We are still funded on the old 80%, with 20% needed to be fundraised each year. 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 you know, 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 community outreach, family court support, transitional support, public education, child witness and a children's program within the shelter.

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 invite a member of the Committee to visit our shelter when you are in our area and/or to connect with us by phone should you have any questions or clarifications about the work we do.

Should you have any further questions or require clarification, I can be reached at sandywm@threeoaks.ca or 613-967-1416 ext. 222

Sincerely yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SWM", is positioned above the typed name.

Sandy Watson-Moyles
Executive Director

cc Neil Ellis, MP, Bay of Quinte
Michael Bossio, MP, Hastings-Lennox & Addington