



## Audit at a glance

### Why we did this audit

- COVID-19 made it harder for women and children who lived in unstable or violent situations where home was not a safe place. In times of crisis, like the pandemic, domestic violence can increase.
- Transition housing provides safe spaces, support services, and other help for women and children leaving violence.
- When COVID-19 protocols limited the capacity of transition housing, BC Housing provided additional safe spaces across the province.

### Objective

To determine whether BC Housing effectively managed the provision of additional safe spaces for women and children leaving violent or unstable situations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Audit period:

April 1, 2020 –  
September 30, 2021

### Conclusion

We concluded that BC Housing effectively managed the provision of additional safe spaces for women and children leaving violent or unstable situations during the COVID-19 pandemic, with some exceptions. We found gaps in BC Housing's response to providers' needs and the collection and use of data.

To help BC Housing respond to other situations where additional space is needed, we made four recommendations focused on:

- confirming the staffing needs of all transition housing providers,
- ensuring hotel and motel operators comply with lease agreements,
- monitoring whether additional spaces are accessible to all women,
- responding to limitations of data on women turned away due to insufficient space.

**BC Housing has accepted all four recommendations.**

### What we found

#### Baseline inventory used to determine initial space needs

- Transition housing information included occupancy levels and number of:
  - spaces
  - bedrooms
  - bathrooms
- Inventory information used to decide how many additional spaces to lease.



## What we found *(continued)*

### **Transition housing providers supported, but improvements needed**

- Cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment were provided, along with funds for food.
- Needs of providers considered when selecting spaces to lease.
- No assessment of staffing needs despite known shortages.
- No process to ensure hotels and motels complied with lease agreements and held rooms leased to BC Housing.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS 1, 2

### **Aimed to provide spaces to all women, but more monitoring needed**

- Data collected included ethno-cultural information.
- Lack of data on:
  - physical ability
  - mental wellness
  - religious beliefs
  - sexual orientation
  - gender identity

#### RECOMMENDATION 3

### **Additional safe spaces tracked**

- Data collected on the number, location, and use of additional spaces.

### **Adjustments made, but better data needed**

- Number of rooms adjusted based on occupancy levels and consultation with transition housing providers.
- Didn't allocate rooms based on information about women turned away due to lack of space.

#### RECOMMENDATION 4

### **After reading the report, you may wish to ask the following questions of government:**

- 1. How will government work with transition housing providers to address gaps in staffing capacity?*
- 2. How will government ensure that spaces are accessible and inclusive?*
- 3. How will government work with transition housing providers to respond to women and children turned away because of insufficient space?*