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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2018PREM0079-002068  
Oct. 25, 2018

Office of the Premier  
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

### **New homes on the way for women and children fleeing violence**

VICTORIA – The British Columbia government is building 280 new homes to provide safe places to stay for women and children fleeing violence, the first major investment in transition housing in more than two decades.

These homes will be delivered in 12 projects around the province. They are the first step in the government’s new Building BC: Women’s Transition Housing Fund, a \$734-million investment over 10 years to build 1,500 transition housing, second-stage housing and affordable housing spaces for women and children fleeing violence.

“In a province that puts people first, we need to make sure women and children can find safety when they need it most,” said Premier John Horgan. “These homes will allow women and children to heal with the supports and services they need, as they begin the process of rebuilding their lives.”

“These first projects will make a tremendous impact in the lives of women and children who need our help,” said Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “For too long, a lack of investment has meant women and children looking for help at a desperate time have found themselves with nowhere to turn. This cannot continue. These homes are just the beginning of those to come over the next 10 years, as we work with non-profit partners to ensure more women and children have safe places to regroup, rebuild and reclaim their lives.”

The housing will be operated by non-profit providers that specialize in housing and supports for women and children who are experiencing or at risk of violence. The new housing will include funding for a range of services, including emotional support and safety planning. Projects will also include new affordable rental housing for women and children ready to move on to more permanent homes.

The Province, through BC Housing, selects projects based on community need, with the goal of getting work underway on 500 housing units within the next three years and 1,500 over the next decade.

#### **Quotes:**

#### **Joanne Baker, executive director, BC Society of Transition Houses –**

“Fleeing violence often results in poverty and homelessness for women and their children if they can’t access safe, secure housing. The reality or risk of homelessness frequently results in women returning to violence. The investment in affordable housing through the Women’s Transition Housing Fund that is dedicated to women and children escaping violence is crucial.”

**Makenna Rielly, executive director, Victoria Women's Transition House Society –**

“We are very excited by this new opportunity to provide second-stage housing for women and children leaving violent and abusive situations. This project will provide critically needed housing and supports to the families we serve, and we are sincerely thankful to all those who have made it possible, including the Province of British Columbia, BC Housing, the City of Langford, Victoria Women’s Transition House board of directors, staff and volunteers. We are deeply grateful to be able to provide much-needed services in collaboration with the West Shore community, and we are honoured to be a part of an initiative that is responding to the needs of women and children in our region.”

**Mitzi Dean, Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity –**

“Everyone has the right to feel safe in their home and their community — yet women, and transgender and gender diverse people continue to face sexism and violence in their everyday life. Ensuring survivors have a safe place to go to rebuild their lives is an essential first step to creating safer, more supportive communities and ending gender-based violence.”

**Quick Facts:**

- The BC Society of Transition Houses has worked with BC Housing on a provincewide needs assessment to help target project funding in communities around the province.
- Women’s transition houses are staffed 24/7 and provide safe, short-term shelter and supports — typically for 30 days — for women and children fleeing violence.
- Safe homes provide safe, short-term shelter and supports — typically for 10 days — for women and children fleeing violence in rural and remote communities.
- Second-stage housing provides safe short-term housing and supports for women after they leave an abusive relationship or situation. Women can stay for six to 18 months while they prepare for independent living.
- The Building BC: Women’s Transition Housing Fund was launched in Budget 2018 as part of the Province’s 30-point housing plan. The plan outlines the biggest investments in affordable housing in B.C.’s history — more than \$7 billion over 10 years.

**Learn More:**

Read Homes for B.C., government’s 30-point plan to address housing affordability for British Columbians: [bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2018/homesbc/2018\\_Homes\\_For\\_BC.pdf](https://bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2018/homesbc/2018_Homes_For_BC.pdf)

To find out what the Province is doing to improve housing affordability, visit: [news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/bc-government-addressing-housing-affordability-challenges](https://news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/bc-government-addressing-housing-affordability-challenges)

A backgrounder follows.

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## BACKGROUND

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### **Approved housing projects for women and children fleeing violence**

Under the Building BC: Women's Transition Housing Fund, the Province is providing funding to build and operate the following new projects:

#### **Lower Mainland:**

Burnaby – Dixon Transition Society will operate up to 20 units of permanent affordable housing for women and women with children.

Chilliwack – Ann Davis Transition Society started operation of a new 10-bed transition house on Oct. 1, 2018.

Vancouver – Governing Council of the Salvation Army will operate up to 10 beds for women who have experienced exploitation and human trafficking.

#### **Interior:**

Invermere – Family Dynamix Association will operate seven safe homes and second-stage housing units. These units will be part of the society's affordable housing project that was approved as part of the BC Housing-Columbia Basin Trust partnership agreement announced in May 2018: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018MAH0046-000801>

Kamloops – Kamloops and District Elizabeth Fry Society will operate up to 40 units of second-stage housing.

Kelowna – Central Okanagan Emergency Shelter Society will operate up to 40 units of second-stage and permanent affordable housing.

#### **North:**

Kitimat – Tamitik Status of Women Association will operate 12 transition house beds, 10 units of second-stage housing and 20 affordable rental homes, including 10 accessible units for women and families in need. The District of Kitimat donated the site for the project, announced by the Province in August 2018: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018MAH0104-001516>

Prince George – Prince George and District Elizabeth Fry Society will operate 18 transition house beds, 16 units of second-stage housing and 21 townhouses for permanent affordable housing.

Smithers – Northern Society for Domestic Peace will operate four second-stage housing units for young women and young mothers, and five second-stage units for women and women with children.

**Vancouver Island:**

Nanaimo – Snuneymuxw Youth and Family Society will operate 10 transition house beds that will primarily serve Indigenous women and children and will provide culturally appropriate supports.

Port Alberni – Alberni Community and Women’s Services Society will operate up to 20 units of second-stage housing.

Langford – Victoria Women’s Transition House Society will operate approximately 20 second-stage housing units.

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