



November 16, 2023

Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

Via Email: sppc@london.ca

Dear Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee Members,

RE: Agenda Item 4.3 Asylum Claimants – November 21, 2023 Meeting

Mission Services of London is a social service agency that provides emergency shelter for men and families, addiction treatment for men, community mental health (outreach) programs, and clothing and household items at no cost through the Mission Store's Emergency Voucher Program. We also engage in shelter diversion, housing selection and housing stability work that helps families bypass the need for emergency shelter, or if that is not possible, to obtain and maintain housing after an emergency shelter stay.

Recently, we perceive an increase in demand for services for newcomer men and families, including individuals seeking asylum in Canada. Last night (November 15), for instance, over 40% of the men staying at the Men's Mission were newcomers. Of these men, just over half were refugee claimants. Meanwhile, at Rotholme Family Shelter, eight out of 20 families in shelter were newcomers (including refugees).

As an emergency shelter provider, our mandate includes not only offering a place to rest and providing nutritious meals; it also includes helping neighbours find, attain and maintain stable housing – regardless of how they came to need such assistance.

Our staff expertly manage supporting program participants toward their housing goals. At the same time, we experience challenges when it comes to adequately serving asylum seekers because their eligibility for supports is limited, and because they have a need for certain services that we are not set up to offer to the required extent. We are looking for ways to collaborate with settlement service providers, like the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre (CCLC), in this regard.

Administration Office
4-797 York Street
London, ON N5W 6A8
T. 519.433.2807
F. 519.434.1956

Community Mental
Health Programs
457 York Street
London, ON N6B 1R3
T. 519.672.8500

The Men's Mission &
Rehabilitation Centre
459 York Street
London, ON N6B 1R3
T. 519.672.8500

Quintin Warner House
477 Queens Avenue
London, ON N6B 1Y3
T. 519.434.8041

Rotholme Women's
& Family Shelter
42 Stanley Street
London, ON N6C 1B1
T. 519.673.4114

Mission Store
4-797 York Street
London, ON N5W 6A8
T. 519.438.3056
missionstore.ca

missionservices.ca

Without access to robust housing and settlement supports among others, asylum seekers' stays in emergency shelter (designed to be a short-term solution), become lengthier. Language barriers, scarce housing options within their budget, and difficulty attaining first and last month's rent, are just some of the obstacles they may face in trying to achieve a fresh start. Their mental and emotional health may suffer from feeling left behind, and their journey could become a most discouraging one.

This is why we support CCLC in their effort to secure additional funding to hire more staff who could extend service to newcomers in shelter – and in the broader community. We have offered in-shelter space to CCLC, so it may deliver newcomer information sessions in different languages, workshops on settlement system navigation and documentation assistance on-site, or staff information sessions that help equip shelter staff who are supporting asylum seekers. These are just some possibilities that could open up if they succeed in their request for additional funding.

We thank you for your consideration of lending support to amplify the efforts of our colleagues at CCLC, whose expertise will be very welcome as we seek to serve new neighbours in our city.

With warm regards,

Ericka Ayala Ronson
Executive Director
Mission Services of London