

## Shelter for women fleeing abuse in Kitimat, B.C., says it doesn't have enough space

Advocacy group says small communities in B.C. need more help from province

By Andrew Kurjata, [CBC News](#) Posted: Nov 24, 2017 5:21 PM PT Last Updated: Nov 24, 2017 5:21 PM PT

A shelter for women fleeing abuse and violence in Kitimat, B.C., says it need to expand its capacity to meet the needs of the community.

"Pretty much since March or April we have been operating at 98 to 100 per cent capacity," said Kristen Guite, director of operations at Tamitik Status of Women, which operates the transition house for women and children fleeing abuse and violence.

"It's busy all the time."

Guite said the shelter has had to turn people away, news that doesn't surprise Tracy Porteous, executive director of the Ending Violence Association of B.C.

"Kitimat has been on our radar screen for quite some time," Porteous said.

Porteous said communities like Kitimat, where many jobs are resource-based, can aggravate problems of violence because men tend to be more financially-secure than women.

"There is a huge disparity of income between men and women," she explained. In some cases, she said, women make an average of \$20,000 a year less than men.

"So that creates a potential financial dependency."

*'If you bring 10,000 men into a community, you're going to have a number of men committing violence' - Tracy Porteous*

She also said work camps, which bring in transient, largely male populations, are another factor.

"Not all men are violent," she said. "But if you bring 10,000 men into a community, you're going to have a number of men committing violence."

The Tamitik shelter is expanding from eight to 14 beds, in part with funding from B.C. Housing., but Porteous said there is still more that could be done by both industry and government.

She suggested industries adopt programs with training around recognizing and stopping violence and called on the province to change its funding formula for assistance programs.

"The formula that we have now is that you have to have a population of 20,000 in order to qualify for our community-based victim assistance program, so Kitimat doesn't qualify," she said. "Yet, the transient population has ballooned."

*With files from Audrey McKinnon*

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