



**Children's
Aid Society**
Of Oxford County

Safe children and youth, strong families, caring communities

Tina Diamond, MSW, RSW, MBA, CHRL
Executive Director

October 18th, 2023

Oxford County Council
c/o Oxford County Administration Building
21 Reeve Street, Woodstock, ON N4S 7Y3

Dear Council Members;

RE: Fully Support Recommendation to Retain Consultant – Development of Strategy for Pathways Out of Homelessness

On behalf of the Children's Aid Society of Oxford County please accept our letter of strong support for the Recommendation contained in Report No: HS 2023-14, September 2023, to *retain a consultant for the development of a Strategy for Pathways Out of Homelessness*.

Our organization works closely with many children, youth, and families in the community and has witnessed the direct consequences of precarious housing situations on individuals and families. Oxford has a dedicated and creative network of social service providers working collaboratively to increase the health and wellness of all community members; however, when an individual or family is impacted negatively by one or more of the social determinants of health, their opportunities for wellness and success are greatly decreased. Housing has been identified as a key determinant of health and we are supporting children, youth and families that are in crisis.

When families in our community experience homelessness they are often referred to our organization due to their children being "in need of protection". Poverty and/or lack of housing should not be the main reason that a family becomes involved with child protection services. The Children's Aid Society of Oxford County collaborates with, and participates, in a vast number of Oxford Network Tables in order to build the capacity of our community. The need for a strategic housing framework is often identified as a gap in strategies currently underway to better the lives of all community members.

An integrated strategy for Pathways for Oxford County is critical at this time. The individuals of our community deserve the opportunity to have the expertise of a consultant who will conduct a comprehensive assessment and make recommendations based on evidence, lived experience, and lessons learned in other communities. The Children's Aid Society of Oxford County fully supports the recommendation to retain a Consultant with specialized knowledge, & a project team, to build a framework that provides choices in the housing system, including supports and multiple pathways.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tina Diamond".

Tina Diamond, MSW, RSW, MBA, CHRL
Executive Director
The Children's Aid Society of Oxford County