

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to explore whether the needs of homeless youth are being met by the Kingston Youth Shelter Project and how their programs and services can be improved.

This topic was chosen for two reasons. First the Kingston Youth Shelter Project is the only shelter in Kingston that exclusively services youth. Second, the Kingston Youth Shelter Project is unique in comparison to other emergency shelters in that it provides services beyond emergency shelter (e.g. drop-in centre and Youth Initiative Program).

The research method is qualitative. Face-to-face interviews with staff and youth that access services at the Kingston Youth Shelter Project were conducted as one aspect of the method. A literature review provided a background to the needs of homeless youth, in addition to different philosophies of service delivery at two other youth shelters in Canada.

An analysis of the data concluded that the Kingston Youth Shelter Project is meeting the needs of homeless youth within their capacity as a shelter. Further, conclusions are made that the needs of homeless youth are being met through the provision of services beyond shelter, such as the drop-in centre and the Youth Initiative Program. In addition, the report finds that, due to a lack of affordable, transitional and second-stage housing, the Kingston Youth Shelter Project is experiencing stress in its ability to provide shelter for homeless youth in Kingston.

The report concludes with a set of recommendations for the Kingston Youth Shelter, which attend to how the project could improve existing services and further meet the needs of homeless youth in Kingston.