



Tysha Owens – Acting Warden
Nova Institution for Women
180 James Street
Truro, Nova Scotia B2N 6R8

April 13th 2026

Re: CAEFS Regional Advocacy Visit, February 2026

This letter details the items that were reported to the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) Atlantic Regional Advocacy Team during our visits to Nova on February 4th, 17th and 18th, 2026. This letter also includes a summary of the discussion that took place during the meeting on February 19th, 2026, relevant laws and policies, and CAEFS' positions. Thank you, and we look forward to your response.

Follow Up – Physical Conditions of Confinement

Description: CAEFS continues to receive reports from individuals stating that their living units are inadequately heated. Individuals shared having to wear multiple layers of clothing and blankets to stay warm and are “always freezing”.

House 1 is reported to have no heat on the entire bottom floor. Cell 201 still has no heating. Individuals from House 5 and 7 shared problems with heating as well. CAEFS noted that on the agenda for the Inmate Committee (IC) meeting, which was subsequently cancelled with little notice, the IC was asking for an update on heating as well as window sealing.

Discussion: Management advised that they were aware of heating issues in one unit but had not previously been informed of similar concerns in the other units mentioned or of any need for window sealing. They shared that if provided with details identifying which houses require window sealing, they will follow up accordingly and will also bring additional units of concern to the attention of maintenance.

Law and Policy:

CCRF s.12: Everyone has the right not to be subjected to any cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.

CCRA s.70: The Service shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that penitentiaries, the penitentiary environment, the living and working conditions of [incarcerated persons] and the working conditions of staff members are safe, healthful and free of practices that undermine a person's sense of personal dignity

Recommendation: CSC has an obligation to provide a living environment that is safe, dignified, and humane. CAEFS urges the institution to ensure that all living units are adequately heated, as inadequate living conditions are well documented to adversely affect both physical health and psychological wellbeing.

V&C Delays

Description: CAEFS received reports of significant delays in processing and delivery of mail, including outside mail as well as institutional mail. Individuals in minimum security reported that mail had not been delivered for several days. Individuals in medium security shared that outside mail continues to be delayed, some stating they have waited weeks after their mail had arrived at Nova. One individual shared that V&C staff had commented to them that they are still the only person who is processing mail, and that they return to work with piles awaiting them.

During CAEFS' site visit to Nova on February 17, individuals were not notified that CAEFS was on site, as appointment slips were not delivered. Many individuals who had signed up to meet with CAEFS did not receive appointment slips at all. On February 18, only six individuals attended appointments with CAEFS, despite sixteen having signed up to meet. Some individuals did not receive their appointment slips until the late evening of the previous day or the afternoon of their scheduled appointment. In addition, several appointment slips contained errors, including listing the incorrect day of the week, which created significant confusion for those who received them.

CAEFS believes the lack of notification to incarcerated individuals regarding our visit resulted in this letter being less comprehensive than usual, as fewer individuals were able to meet with us and, consequently, fewer issues were reported. This should not be interpreted as an absence of concerns, but rather as a reflection of the fact that appointment slips were not delivered, and individuals were therefore unable to communicate their issues to CAEFS.

Discussion: CAEFS raised this issue with management, noting that delays in mail delivery have impacted incarcerated individuals' ability to maintain contact with family and community, as well as access advocacy services provided by CAEFS. Management indicated that they will raise this issue with V&C staff and have committed to providing CAEFS with an update once this has been addressed.

Law and Policy:

CCRA s.4 (d): [Incarcerated persons] retain the rights of all members of society except those that are, as a consequence of the sentence, lawfully and necessarily removed or restricted

CCRA s. 71(1): In order to promote relationships between [incarcerated persons] and the community, an [incarcerated person] is entitled to have reasonable contact, including visits and correspondence, with family, friends and other persons from outside the penitentiary, subject to such reasonable limits as are prescribed for protecting the security of the penitentiary or the safety of persons

CD s. 85 (13): Under normal circumstances, incoming mail shall be distributed to [incarcerated persons] and outgoing mail forwarded to the Post Office within 24 hours of receipt.

Recommendation: CAEFS recommends that the institution ensures timely processing of all V&C requests and maintains adequate staffing to prevent disruptions in access to family and CAEFS advocacy. Access to family



contact and external advocacy are critical, non-essential supports that the CSC is responsible for facilitating. An absence of either produces adverse outcomes for federally sentenced individuals.

Population Update

CAEFS would also like to note that the recorded number of incarcerated people at Nova at the time of the management meeting was 116, with 2 people currently incarcerated in the Structured Intervention Unit.

In closing and on behalf of CAEFS Atlantic Regional Advocacy team, I would like to thank the management team at Nova for continuing to have open dialogue, investigating the reports we raise, and engaging in solutions orientated discussion wherever possible.

Respectfully,

S. Thompson

Shelby Thompson
Lead Advocate, Atlantic Regional Advocacy Team, CAEFS

