



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Social Services Sub-committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: Wednesday, November 13, 2024
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall
Sub-committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Briscoe - Vice Chair, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Wordofa
Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary

To watch the Sub-committee meeting live, please click the following link:

<https://video.isilive.ca/stratford/live.html>

A video recording of the meeting will also be available through a link on the City's website <https://calendar.stratford.ca/meetings> following the meeting.

Pages

1. Call to Order

The Chair to call the Meeting to Order.

Councillor Biehn provided regrets for this meeting.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Conduct Statement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring

a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

3. Delegations

None scheduled.

4. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

4.1 Update on the Provincial Centralized Intake Initiative (SOC24-013)

3 - 5

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Update on the Provincial Centralized Intake Initiative" (SOC24-013), be received for information.

5. Department Update

6 - 9

The following Department Update Infographics of September, 2024 have been provided for the information of Sub-committee:

- Monthly Children's Services Report
- Monthly Homelessness Report
- Monthly Housing Report
- Monthly Ontario Works Report

6. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is January 14, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall, pending Council approval of the 2025 Sub-committee Schedule.

7. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Social Services Sub-committee meeting adjourn.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: November 13, 2024
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report Number: SOC24-013
Attachments: None

Title: Update on the Provincial Centralized Intake Initiative

Objective: To provide Council with an update regarding the Provincial expansion of the Centralized Intake initiative.

Background: On June 21, 2021, the local Ontario Works office was onboarded into the Centralized Intake initiative, which allowed applicants to apply online or over the telephone for Ontario Works services through a new Provincial unit, the Intake and Benefit Administration Unit (IBAU). This information was detailed in report SOC21-006 which was presented to Sub-committee in June 2021. Through this unit, applicants can now receive financial assistance through an automated process which determines eligibility utilizing a risk-based approach. This approach is intended to modernize and allow for a more seamless delivery of social assistance. Clients can now apply online or over the telephone, verify their identity and sign the applicable forms online, allowing them to receive their first month of assistance before they meet with a local Ontario Works caseworker. The Centralized Intake process has been iterated upon since its launch and continues to be studied and reviewed by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) with an aim to have all applications eventually submitted through the IBAU.

Analysis: In September 2024, the local office received a memo from MCCSS informing of their intention to expand the Centralized Intake program. Beginning on October 1, 2024, the Ministry would now be responsible for all initial eligibility decisions for ten select Consolidated Municipal Service Managers. The City of Stratford is not one of the ten sites that have been included in phase one of the roll-out. The ten local Ontario Works offices that are apart of the initial phase of the roll-out would now only process applications for Temporary Care Assistance (TCA), Emergency Assistance (EA) and Under-18 applications. Once an applicant is granted assistance, the local Ontario Works

office would be responsible for ongoing eligibility verification, case management and creating a suitable action plan which helps move the client toward self-sufficiency.

This is a significant shift from the way applications are currently processed within the Ontario Works program. Although the IBAU processes several types of Ontario Works applications currently, applicants still need to apply in the local office, and the local office is currently responsible for all applications requiring an interpreter, a trustee, clients with no fixed address, Under-18, TCA and EA. There is no change to files that are granted by the IBAU as the local office currently completes post-grant activities, ongoing case management and action plan maintenance. With the shift that has been undertaken in the 10 CMSM's that are included in phase one of the roll-out, applicants will no longer have the ability to apply in the local office nor will they be able to meet with a local office caseworker until their application is granted by the IBAU. The CMSM's across the Province have raised concerns regarding the impacts this may have on clients, specifically those without a phone or access to email, those with no fixed address, clients requiring interpreters and those in immediate need of assistance. MCCSS has advised that this process is iterative, and they will modify as needed based on the feedback and learnings from the first ten sites.

The expansion of Centralized Intake will continue to occur across the remainder of the Province by the end of 2025. Although there are no firm dates, the local office is beginning to review processes, provide the means for clients to apply online within the office and train staff on the pending changes. Furthermore, once a date is established, the Ontario Works Division will communicate the changes to community partners who may see an increase in clients needing to access computers to complete their online application.

The last change to highlight because of this expansion is a significant regulatory and legislative change to the Ontario Works Act which designates MCCSS as the delivery agent, and CMSM's as delivery partners. This change is required to allow the Ministry to be responsible for initial eligibility decisions, authorizing initial payments and notifying applicants of their decisions. Furthermore, the Ministry will begin to hear appeals regarding initial eligibility decisions including Internal Reviews and appeals to the Social Benefits Tribunal, both of which are currently completed by the local OW office. With the regulatory change to the Ontario Works Act, the Ministry will now appoint an Ontario Works Administrator at the Provincial level. The City of Stratford will continue to be a delivery agent up until the point that we are onboarded into the Centralized Intake expansion, at which time we will become a delivery partner. The Ministry has also indicated that there are no changes to the cost sharing relationship or funding levels that currently exist because of these amendments.

Financial Implications:**Not applicable:**

There are no financial implications identified at this time. If at any point there are financial implications because of these changes, a further report will be provided to Council detailing those impacts.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Not applicable: This report does not align with one of the Strategic Priorities as this report is informational only and relates to changes that are forthcoming within the local office. Currently, there is no impact to service delivery within the City of Stratford nor are there changes which relate to the strategic priorities.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Not applicable: There is no environmental impact detailed in this report as the changes highlighted are related to technical processes, regulations, and legislation.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Update on the Provincial Centralized Intake Initiative" (SOC24-013), be received for information.

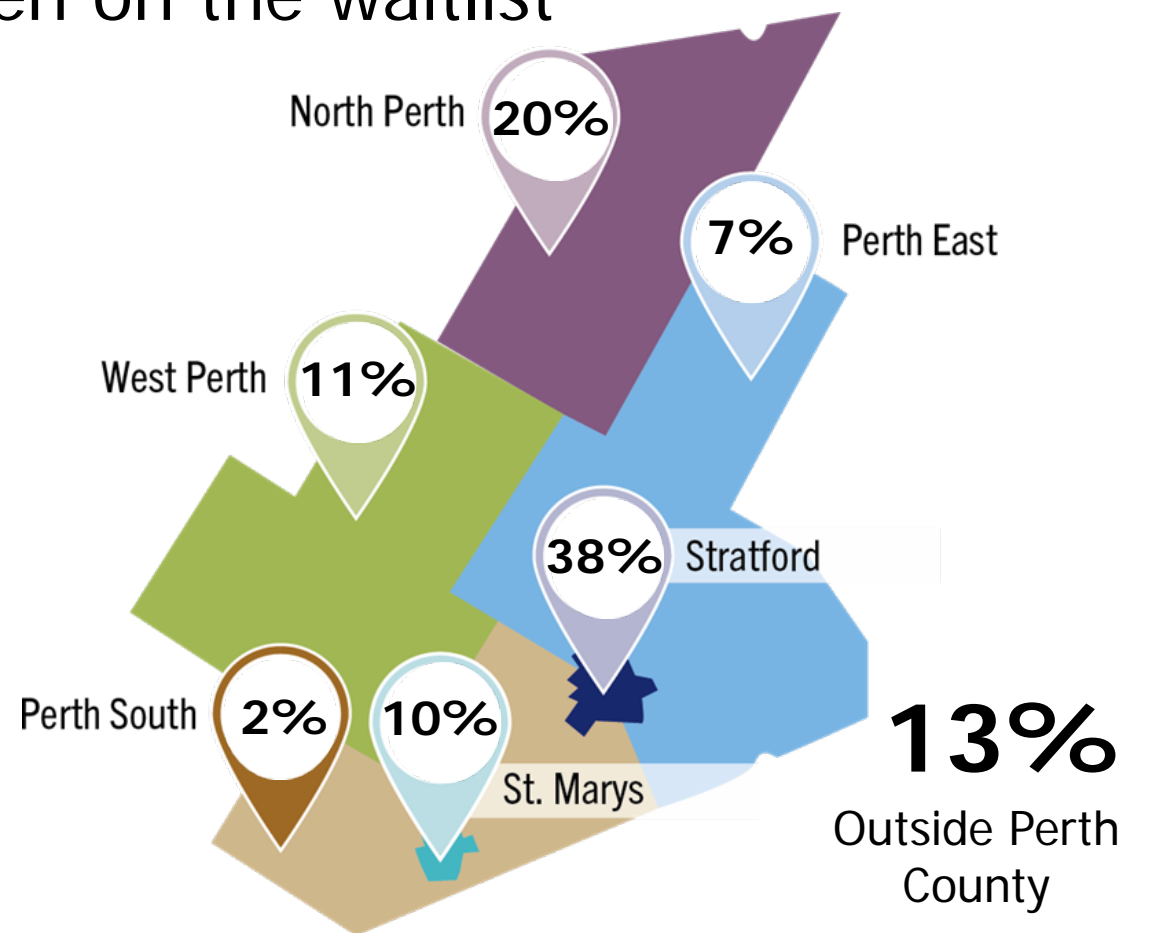
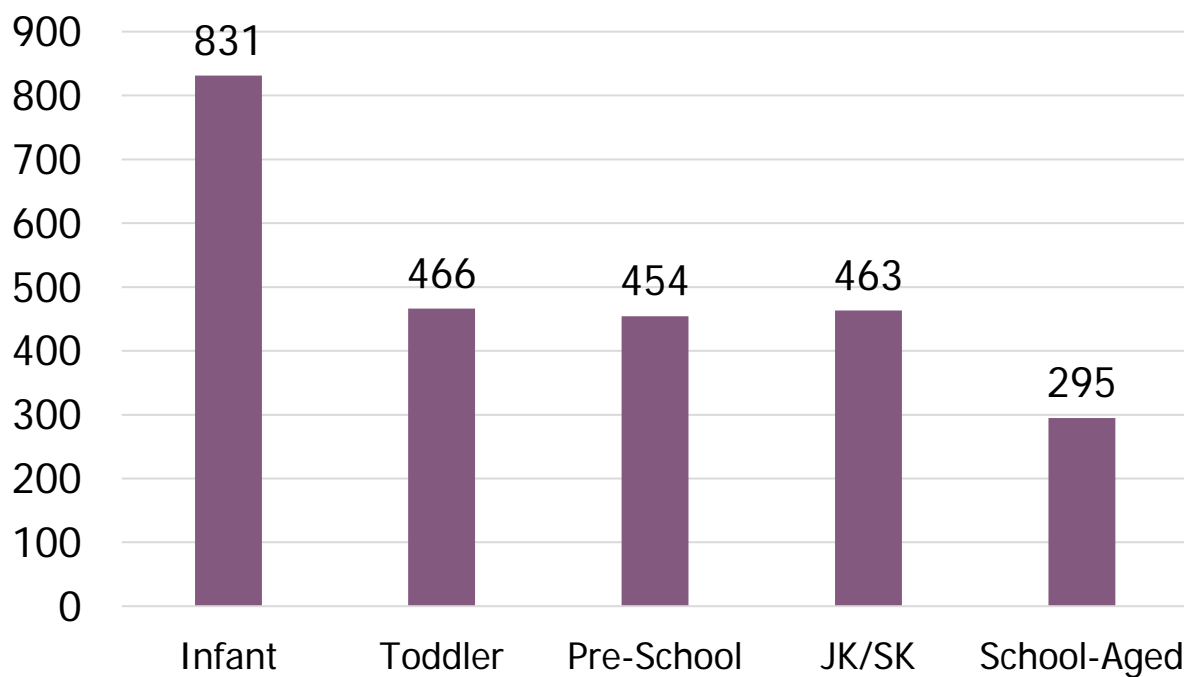
Prepared by: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Recommended by: Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
 Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer

SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY CHILDREN'S SERVICES REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

2509 Total number of Children on the waitlist

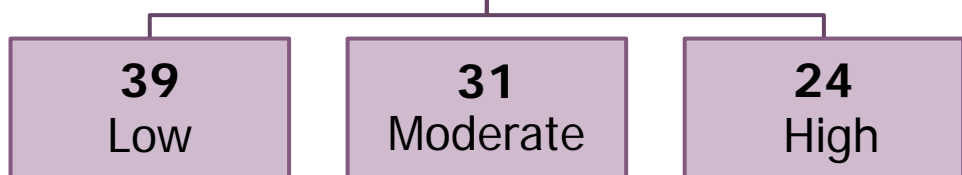
Age Category on the waitlist



Resource Consulting

94 Total Children supported by the Program

Level of Support



EarlyON

558 Unique children (0-6 years) served

428 Unique Parents/ Caregivers served

1353 Visits by children (0-6 years)

1071 Visits by Parents/ Caregivers



Information Bulletin

Through our continued partnership with Conestoga College, we are expanding our current ECE cohort of educators by adding a full time ECE diploma program right here in Stratford, contact childrenservices@stratford.ca for more information.



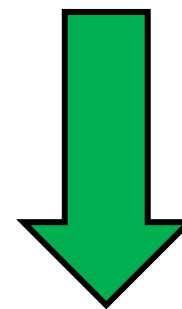
SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY HOMELESSNESS REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys



151

Total number of households experiencing homelessness



This is a decrease from August 2024, when there were **158** households experiencing homelessness



6

New households entering into homelessness



12

Households returned to service area or reconnected with services



1

Households who lost their housing



5

Households who became housed



21

Households who left the service area or had no contact with service provider

Population Specific Information

109 Single Adults

17 Youth (16-24)

25 Families

133 Chronic

32 Unsheltered

24 Identify as Indigenous

Information Bulletin

Many people experiencing homelessness are employed; however, it is much more difficult to find a job while experiencing homelessness because of several challenges, such as: lacking a permanent address, not having regular access to showers, barriers to transportation, and other difficulties like mental illness, make it difficult to obtain employment. Even when individuals experiencing homelessness find jobs, they are often part-time or minimum wage positions.

Source: The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness - The Homelessness Hub

For more information about housing and homelessness services and supports please visit: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/Homelessness.aspx>



SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY SOCIAL HOUSING REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

576 Total number of Households on the waitlist

Unit Size

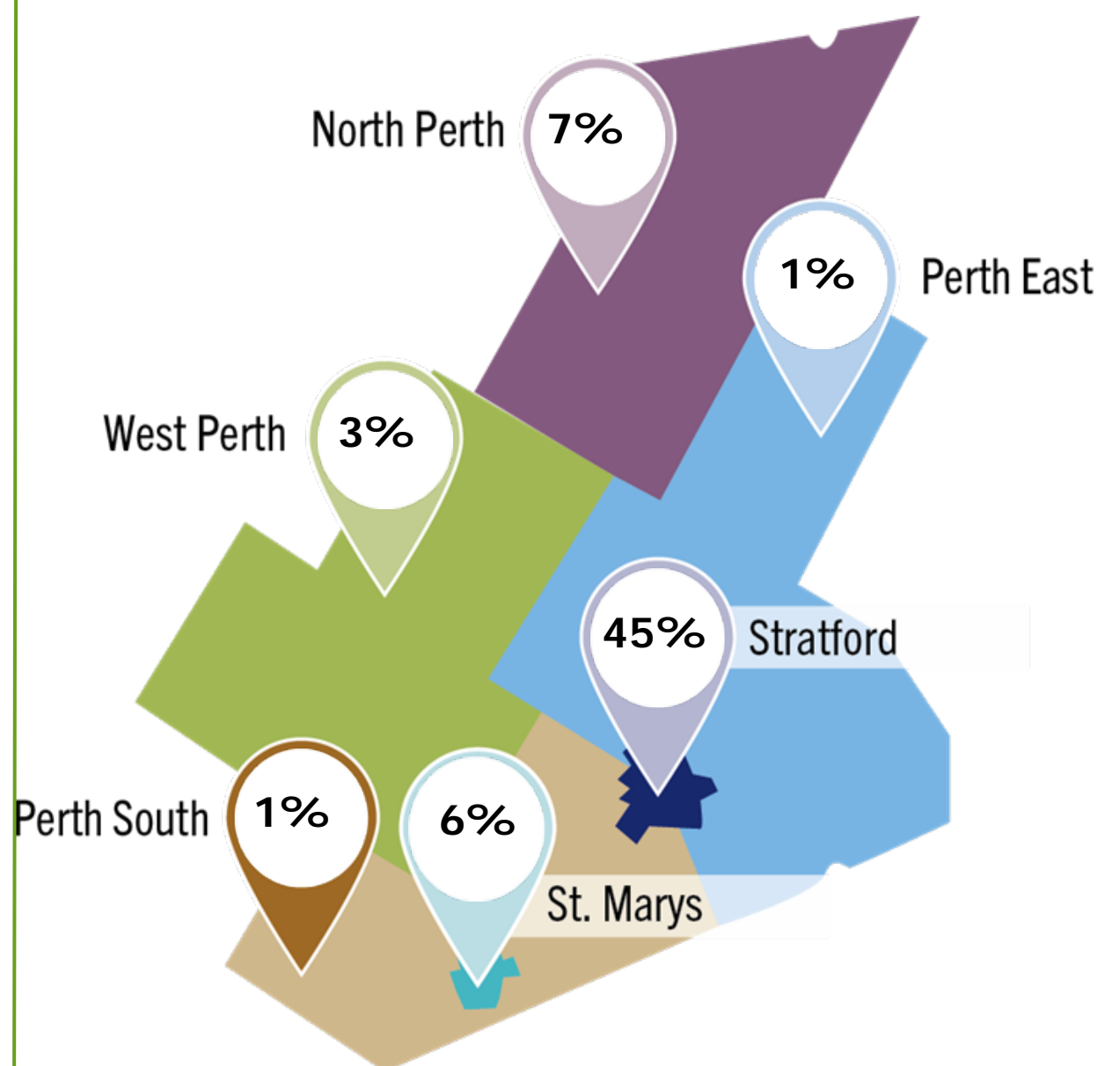
1 Bedroom	62%
2 Bedroom	16%
3 Bedroom	12%
4+ Bedroom	11%

Applicant Type

Single/ Couple	54%
Family	35%
Senior	12%

Priority Status

Chronological Order	87%
Homeless	10%
Special Provincial Priority (SPP)*	4%



Unknown: **6%**

Outside Perth County: **32%**

*SPP: Survivor of domestic abuse or trafficking

*Current applicant address

Move ins & Move outs

4 Total number of move outs

9 Total number of move ins

Maintenance



344

Number of
Work orders
requested

For more information about housing services and supports please visit: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/housing.aspx>



SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY ONTARIO WORKS REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys



797 Total number of active caseloads

55 Total number of active temporary care cases

*If you are an adult and you are temporarily responsible for the care of a child who is in financial need, you may be eligible for temporary care assistance on their behalf.



31%

Percentage of caseload terminations exiting to employment



5%

Percentage of Caseload terminated



85

New applications received



13%

Percentage of caseloads with employment earnings



\$945

Average monthly employment earnings

Population Specific Information



60%

Singles without dependents



30%

Lone parent families



5%

Couples with or without dependents

2.4

Years

Average time on Assistance

\$733

The maximum amount a Single on Ontario works receives per month



Information Bulletin

The Sports & Leisure program provides children under the age of 18, who are active on a Social Assistance file, up to \$500 per year to access various sports or leisure activities. The program spent \$50,000 in 2024 supporting 150 children across Perth County (118 in Stratford, 26 Perth County, 6 St. Marys). Activities included Soccer, Hockey, Martial Arts, Dance lessons, Swimming Lessons, YMCA Passes, summer camps, youth groups (ie: girl guides), school trips, and music lessons. Funding will reset in January 2025.

For more information about Ontario Works and Social Assistance please visit: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/ontarioworks.aspx#How-to-Apply-for-Financial-Assistance>

