



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

Date: Tuesday, June 10, 2025
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall
Sub-committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Briscoe - Vice Chair, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Wordofa
Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Adam Betteridge - Interim Chief Administrative Officer/ Director of Building and Planning, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Jeff Wilson - Manager of Housing, Marc Bancroft - Manager of Planning, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, 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.

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

3.1 Request for Delegation by Tanner Bergsma

3 - 6

Tanner Bergsma, Co-founder of the Tanner Bergsma Foundation, will be speaking to Sub-committee regarding the housing and cost-of living crisis in Stratford.

Motion by

THAT Tanner Bergsma be heard.

4. Department Update

7 - 11

The following Department Update Infographics of April, 2025 have been provided for the information of Sub-committee:

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

5. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is July 15, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

6. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

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

Delegation Request submitted: Friday May 16th 2025 10:49 AM

Reference number 2025-05-16-019.

- **Name of Delegate(s) (include title/position, if applicable) :**

Tanner Bergsma, multi national autistic social justice activist, award winning author, co-founder of the Tanner Bergsma Foundation

- **Reason for Delegation Request :**

As someone who was born and raised in Stratford, I am returning to speak not only from lived experience, but on behalf of those in our community whose voices are often unheard—particularly our homeless population and vulnerable residents struggling under the weight of rising costs.

Stratford is facing a crisis of affordability. The price of rent and basic necessities has risen beyond what many can manage. According to recent CMHC data, Stratford's average rent has increased by over 20% in the past two years alone—surpassing what is manageable for individuals on ODSP, CPP, minimum wage, or working precarious jobs.

There is an urgent and growing gap between the cost of living and the reality of income for thousands in our city. This delegation is being made to:

- Advocate for the urgent expansion of affordable and supportive housing options within Stratford;
- Highlight the impact of inflation and rental hikes on low-income and homeless populations;
- Call for a cross-sectoral, human-centred response that includes lived experience voices in planning and policy decisions;
- Emphasize the moral and civic responsibility we have to ensure no one in Stratford is left behind simply because they cannot afford to live.

Stratford raised me—but it is now becoming unlivable for the very people who built and continue to serve this community. I am here to urge Council to act with compassion, urgency, and equity.

- **Action/Decision Being Requested of Council :**

Prioritize Affordable Housing Development:

Commit to increasing the stock of affordable, supportive, and transitional housing through municipal land use strategies, incentives for developers, and partnerships with non-profits.

2. Revise the Official Plan Through an Equity Lens:

Ensure the revised Official Plan includes concrete strategies to address:

- Aging population needs (e.g., accessible housing, mobility planning)
- Income insecurity
- Mental health and addiction supports
- Inclusion of Indigenous and marginalized voices

3. Cap Rental Increases on City-Owned Properties:

Where possible, implement rental control measures and provide supports for tenants living in municipally affiliated housing to avoid displacement.

4. Establish a Community Advisory Committee on Poverty and Homelessness:

Form a standing committee composed of individuals with lived experience, social service providers, and city staff to ensure ongoing input and responsive policy development.

5. Fund a Municipal Mental Health and Outreach Response Team:

Allocate resources to a multi-disciplinary street outreach program that responds to mental health crises, housing instability, and addictions with care, not criminalization.

6. Create a Vulnerable Populations Emergency Fund:

Establish a city-managed emergency assistance fund for individuals in crisis to access food, shelter, or urgent supports when no other help is available.

7. Expand Senior Support Services:

Ensure that Stratford's growing elderly population has access to affordable home care, accessible transit, and appropriate housing options that allow them to age in place with dignity.

- **Clearly outline the subject of your presentation. Please note if you have already been a delegation on this matter, you will need to specify the new information that you intend on presenting.**

Subject of Presentation:

Addressing the Urgent Housing and Cost-of-Living Crisis in Stratford: A Call for Inclusive Planning and Immediate Support for Vulnerable Populations

As a lifelong resident of Stratford and an advocate for equity and social justice, I am here to present on the escalating housing affordability crisis and the broader impact of rising living costs on Stratford's most vulnerable residents—including seniors, individuals with disabilities, low-income households, and the unhoused.

This presentation will address the following key areas:

- The growing gap between income and rental costs in Stratford;
- The increasing number of residents at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness;
- The urgent need for affordable and supportive housing;
- The importance of revising Stratford's Official Plan through an equity-focused lens;
- Tangible actions Council can take to meet the needs of our aging and vulnerable population;
- The role I am playing as an advocate and contributor to municipal planning processes.

The goal of this delegation is to present solutions rooted in lived experience, data, and compassion—and to urge the City of Stratford to

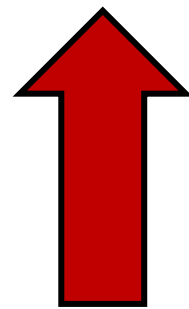
implement structural changes that protect and uplift all residents, especially those being left behind in today's economic climate.

SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY CHILDREN'S SERVICES REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

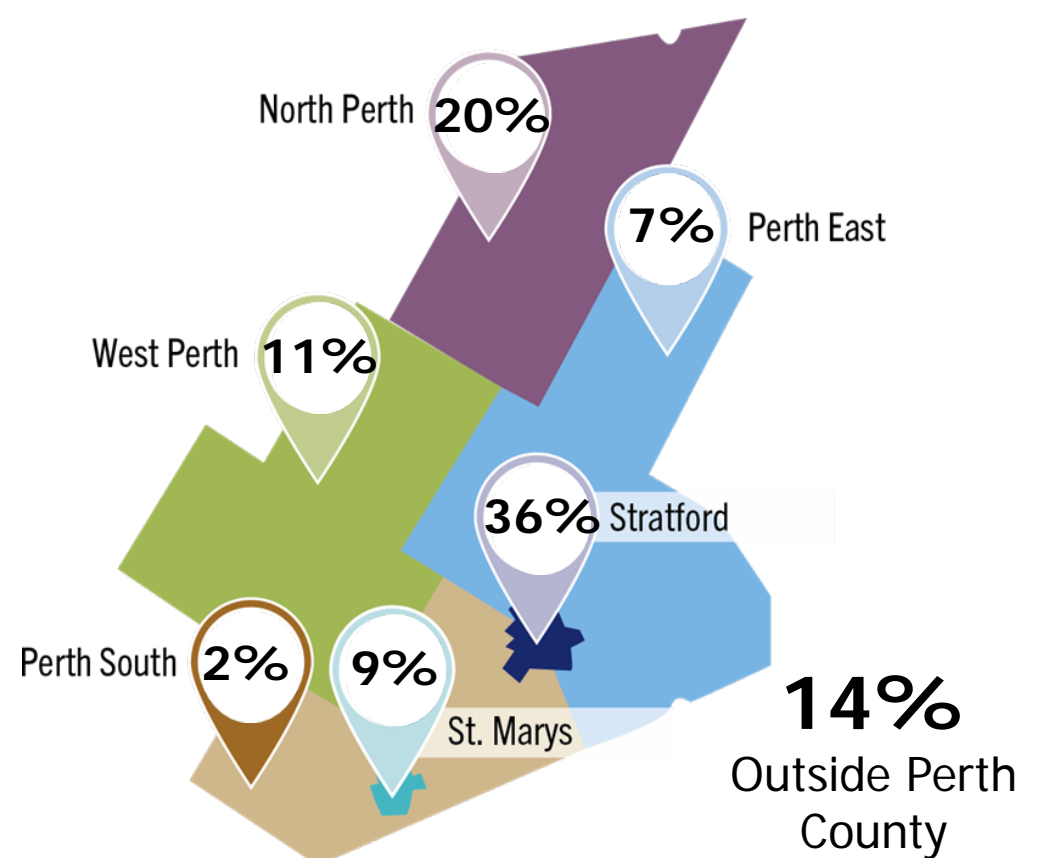
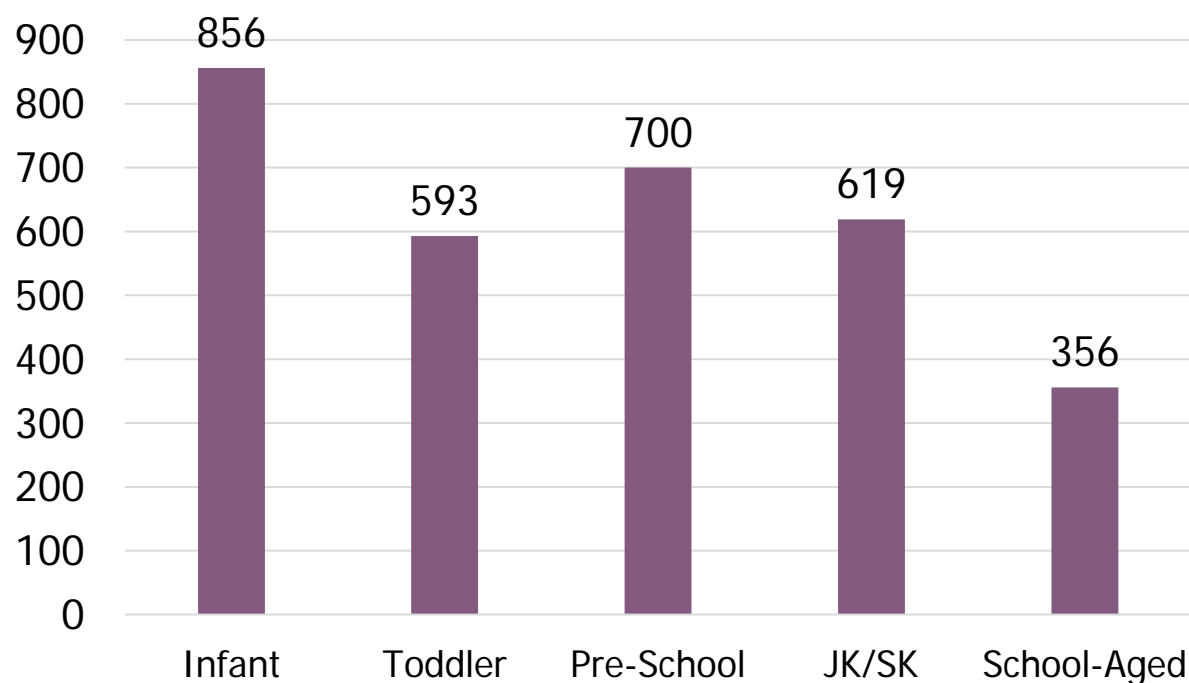
3,124

Total number of children on the child care waitlist



This is an increase from March 2025, when there were **3,078** children on the child care waitlist

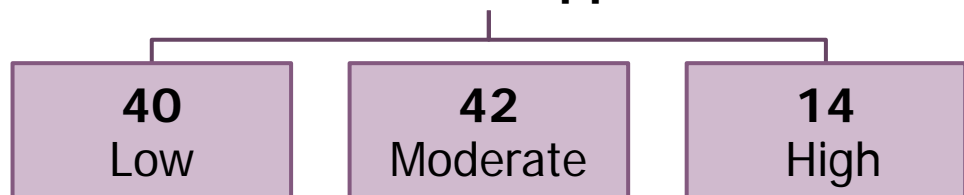
Age Category on the waitlist



Resource Consulting

96 Total children supported by the Program

Level of Support



EarlyON

599 Unique children (0-6 years) served

476 Unique parents/caregivers served

1,640 Visits by children (0-6 years)

1,337 Visits by parents/caregivers

i Information Bulletin

The Children's Services Division is the manager for child care in Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County. In partnership with the community, the Children's Services Division promotes fair and equal access to high quality care for children, and support to their families and caregivers.

For more information about Children's Services and supports please visit: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/childcare.aspx>



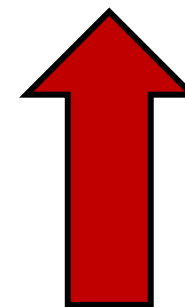
SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY HOMELESSNESS REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys



148

Total number of households experiencing homelessness



This is an increase from March 2025, when there were **140** households experiencing homelessness



8

New households entering into homelessness



12

Households returned to service area or reconnected with services



5

Households who lost their housing



4

Households who became housed



13

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

Population Specific Information

109 Single Adults

18 Youth (16-24)

21 Families

128 Chronic

23 Unsheltered

19 Identify as Indigenous

Information Bulletin

A variety of different factors can contribute to an individual's experience of homelessness. Often, people experience homelessness when all other options have been exhausted, and/or they are dealing with circumstances that make it difficult to maintain housing. Some of these obstacles that may lead people to their experiences of homelessness include:

- Eviction
- The affordable housing crisis
- Coping with mental illnesses or addictions, which makes it difficult to maintain housing

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>

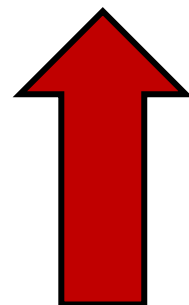


SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY SOCIAL HOUSING REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

600

Total number of Households
on the centralized waitlist



This is an increase from
March 2025, when there
were **597** households on the
centralized waitlist

Unit Size

1 Bedroom	61%
2 Bedroom	15%
3 Bedroom	13%
4+ Bedroom	12%

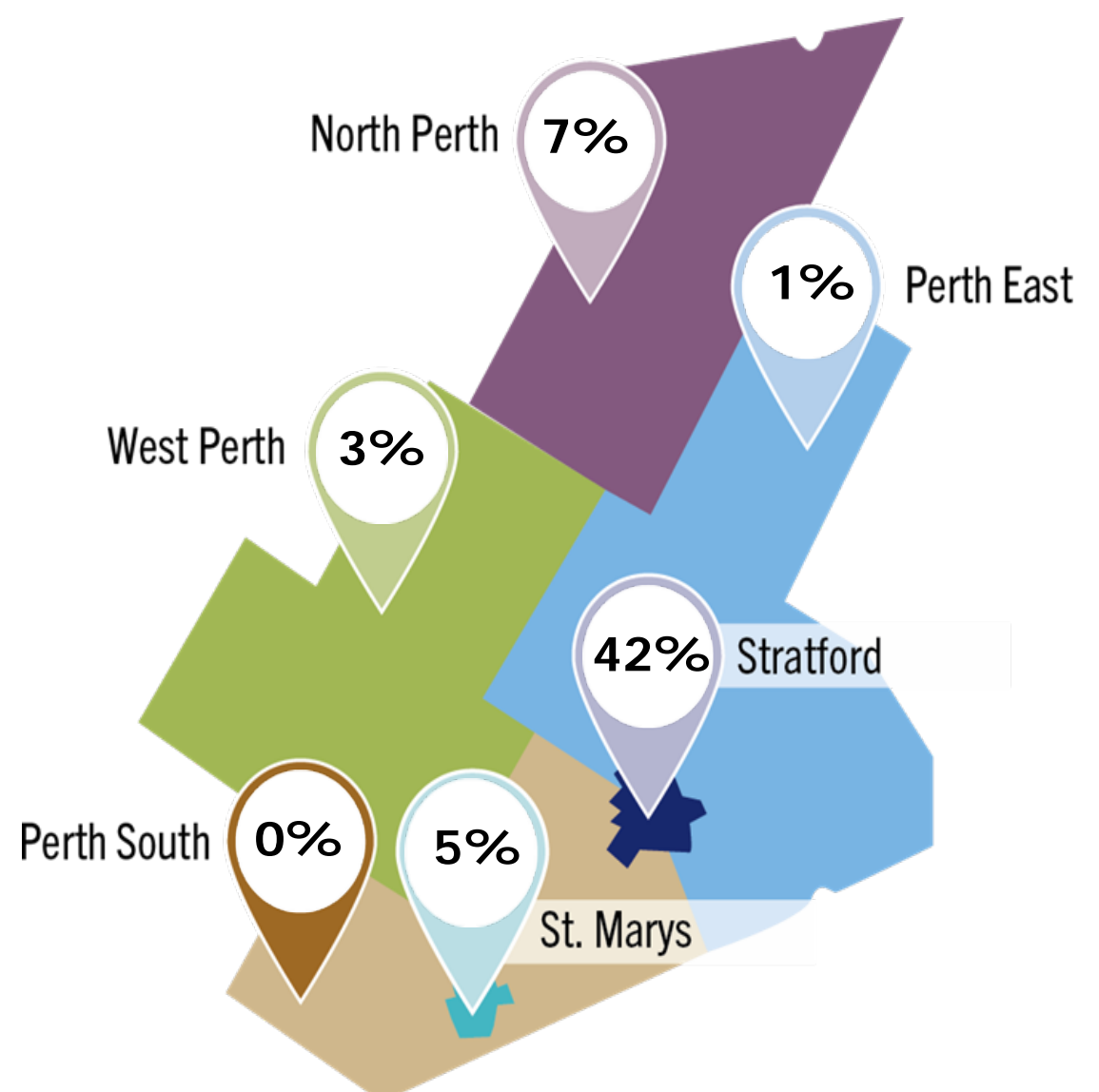
Applicant Type

Single/Couple	53%
Family	37%
Senior	11%

Priority Status

Chronological Order	88%
Homeless	8%
Special Provincial Priority (SPP)*	5%

*SPP: Survivor of domestic abuse or trafficking



Unknown: **7%**

Outside Perth County: **35%**

*Current applicant address

Move ins & Move outs

7 Total number of move outs

7 Total number of move ins

Maintenance



320

Number of
Work orders
requested

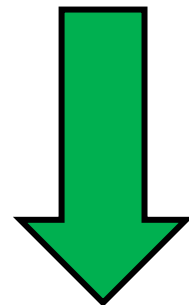
For more information about housing services and supports please
visit: <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/housing.aspx>



SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY ONTARIO WORKS REPORT

Stratford, Perth County, & St. Marys

842 Total number of
active caseloads



This is a decrease from
March 2025, when there
were **846** active cases

49 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.



25%

Percentage of
caseload
terminations exiting
to employment



8%

Percentage
of Caseload
terminated



73

New applications
received



13%

Percentage of
caseloads with
employment earnings



\$853

Average monthly
employment
earnings

Population Specific Information



69%

Singles without
dependents



26%

Lone parent
families



5%

Couples with
or without
dependents

**2.3
Years**

Average time
on Assistance

\$733

The maximum
amount a Single on
Ontario works
receives per month



Information Bulletin

Ontario Works provides income and employment supports to people in temporary financial need. If you qualify, Ontario Works can provide you with:

- Financial assistance to help you cover the costs of your basic needs (example: food and housing costs)
- Employment assistance to help you prepare for and find a job.

You may also be eligible for health benefits for yourself and your family, including drug and dental coverage.

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>



SOCIAL SERVICES MONTHLY CITY OF STRATFORD REPORT

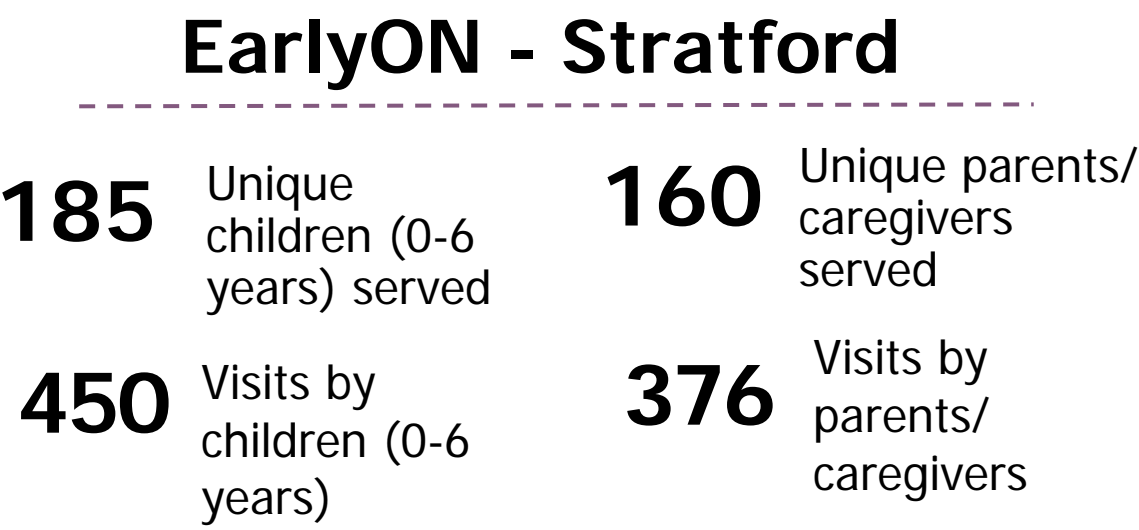
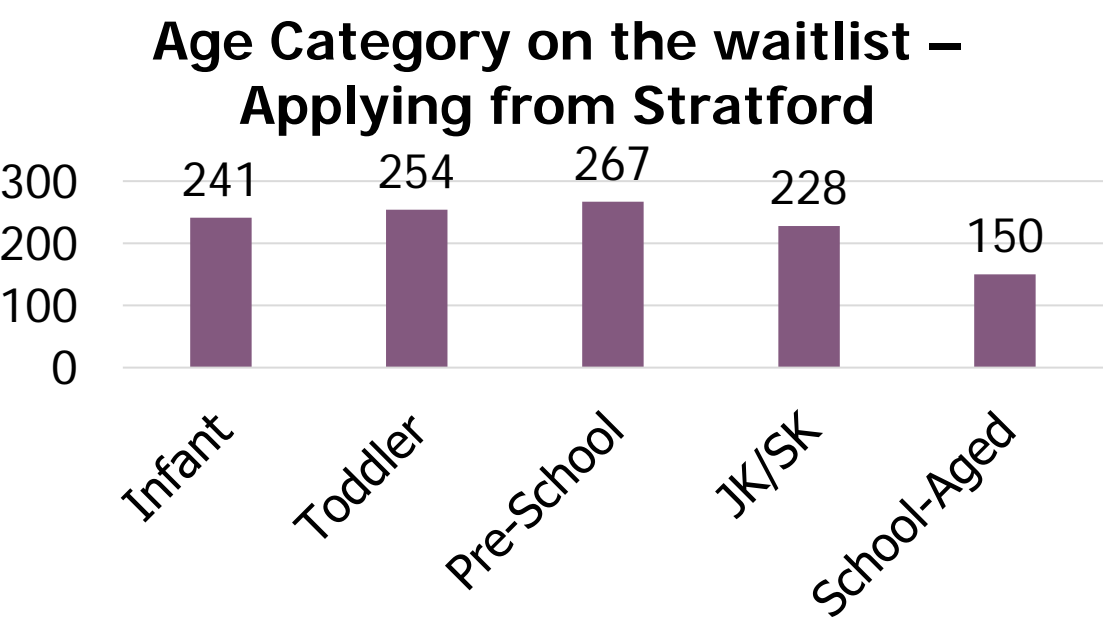
Children’s Services

1,140

Total number of children on the child care waitlist applying from Stratford

37%

Percentage of the total child care waitlist applying from Stratford



Social Housing

254

Total Households on the centralized waitlist applying from Stratford

Unit Size

1 Bedroom	67%
2 Bedroom	13%
3 Bedroom	11%
4+ Bedroom	9%

Applicant Type

Single/Couple	59%
Family	30%
Senior	11%

42%

Percentage of the total centralised waitlist applying from Stratford

Priority Status

Chronological Order	84%
Homeless	10%
Special Provincial Priority (SPP)*	6%

*SPP: Survivor of domestic abuse or trafficking

Ontario Works

504

Total number of active cases in Stratford

60%

Percentage of the total Ontario Works caseload that are in Stratford