



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Social Services Committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: January 24, 2022

Time: 7:05 P.M.

Location: Electronic Meeting

Committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Bunting - Vice Chair, Mayor Mathieson, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Clifford, Councillor Gaffney, Councillor Ingram, Councillor Ritsma, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Vassilakos

Staff Present: Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Officer, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, David St. Louis - Director of Community Services, John Paradis - Fire Chief, Anne Kircos - Acting Director of Human Resources, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure and Development Services, Chris Bantock - Deputy Clerk, Jodi Akins - Council Clerk Secretary, Karmen Krueger - Acting Director of Corporate Services

To watch the Committee meeting live, please click the following link: <https://stratford-ca.zoom.us/j/83703112769?pwd=M0VzaFA4Sm5HcGNwdWVmdloxVVpvQT09>

A video recording of this meeting will also be available through a link on the [City's website](#) following the meeting.

Pages

1. Call to Order

The Chair to call the Meeting to Order.

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. | Sub-committee Minutes | 4 - 11 |
| | Sub-committee minutes are attached for background regarding the discussion held at the January 11, 2022 Sub-committee meeting. | |
| 4. | Delegations | |
| | None scheduled. | |
| 5. | Report of the Manager of Children's Services | |
| 5.1. | Information on Workforce Funding for Child Care and Early Years (SOC22-002) | 12 - 14 |
| | Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Information on Workforce Funding for Child Care and Early Years" (SOC22-002) be received for information. | |
| | Motion by _____ | |
| | Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Information on Workforce Funding for Child Care and Early Years" (SOC22-002) be received for information. | |
| 6. | Report of the Manager of Ontario Works | |
| 6.1. | 2021 Homeless Enumeration Results (SOC22-001) | 15 - 18 |
| | Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "2021 Homeless Enumeration Results" (SOC22-001) be received for information. | |
| | Motion by _____ | |
| | Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled "2021 Homeless Enumeration Results" (SOC22-001) be received for information. | |
| 6.2. | Coordinated Response for those Unsheltered (SOC22-003) | 19 - 39 |
| | Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Coordinated Response for those Unsheltered" (SOC22-003) be received for information. | |
| | Motion by _____ | |
| | Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Coordinated Response for those Unsheltered" (SOC22-003) be received for information. | |

7. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by _____

Committee Decision: THAT the Social Services Committee meeting adjourn.



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Social Services Sub-committee MINUTES

Date: January 11, 2022

Time: 4:30 P.M.

Location: Electronic Meeting

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Bunting - Vice Chair, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Ritsma, Councillor Vassilakos

Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Darren Barkhouse - Manager of Children's Services, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Greg Skinner – Stratford Police Services Police Chief, Quin Malott - Manager of Parks, Forestry and Cemetery, Danielle Clayton – Recording Secretary, Tatiana Dafoe – City Clerk

Also present: Councillor Ingram, members of the public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Meeting to Order.

4. Delegations

None scheduled.

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

No disclosures of pecuniary interest were made by a Member at the January 11, 2022, Social Services Sub-committee meeting.

3. Adoption of the Addendum to the Agenda

Motion by Councillor Ritsma

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Addendum to the Social Services Sub-committee Agenda, to add an attachment to Item 5.1, be adopted as printed.

Carried

5. Report of the Manager of Children's Services

5.1 Information on Workforce Funding for Child Care and Early Years (SOC22-002)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Information on Workforce Funding for Child Care and Early Years" (SOC22-002) be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Director of Social Services introduced the Manager of Children's Services as this was his first report to Sub-committee. The Manager of Children's Services reviewed the report noting that the Federal Government has provided the Province of Ontario with a one-time Workforce Fund that is aimed at helping support the storage of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs). The City has received \$450,287.00 for 2022 and an additional \$120,000.00 for the first quarter of 2023. There are approximately 80 full time RECEs jobs that are vacant across all child care centres, before and after school programs, EarlyON Children and Family Centres within the City's service area.

Motion by Councillor Vassilakos

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Information on Workforce Funding for Child Care and Early Years" (SOC22-002) be received for information.

Carried

6. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

6.1 2021 Homeless Enumeration Results (SOC22-001)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "2021 Homeless Enumeration Results" (SOC22-001) be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works reviewed the report and advised the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) requires the enumeration to be completed. Staff have been actively collecting data since October 2019 and the enumeration was completed on October 30, 2022.

The methodology used for this enumeration was mandated by the MMAH and a single night was to be used to provide a snapshot. Not every household experiencing homelessness in the area completed a survey during the timeframe, meaning that the actual number of households experiencing homelessness at the end of October according to the By-Name List was 164. The By-Name List is updated monthly. The numbers reflect the service area which includes the City of Stratford, Perth County and St. Marys.

The Manager of Ontario Works highlighted the following which reflect the 118 surveyed respondents:

- 63% were provisionally accommodated (in temporary housing situations, transitional housing, staying with friends or family, in provincial institutions such as a jail or hospital).
- 86% reported having a mental health issue.
- 56% reported having a substance use issue.
- The average age was 38.

In regard to the risk factors, the Manager of Ontario Works stated that approximately one-third of the surveyed had some form of illness or medical condition, one-third had some form of physical limitation, 43% had some form of learning or cognitive limitation and over half had self identified that there was a substance use issue. Historically, the reason for homelessness has been consistent and has primarily been interpersonal and family issues, housing and financial issues and health and corrections. The By-Name List is extremely important to ensure that all organizations that are working with individuals who are currently experiencing

homelessness have the same access to data to ensure that families are prioritized for services as they become available.

In response to Sub-committee questioning, the Manager of Ontario Works stated that the 25% reflected individuals who have been discharged from provincial institutions classified as correctional facilities and hospitals. In regard to the 164 names on the By-Name List, this list speaks to the number of heads of households and there may be dependants. Surveys are distributed in person, over the phone and there is an outreach team that goes out to meet individuals on site at various locations. Currently there are three organizations that are used for emergency shelter as well as ShelterLink and Optimism Place.

The Manager of Ontario Works advised that when interacting with individuals experiencing homelessness, members of the public should always keep safety in mind. He stated it is important to be kind, remember these individuals are persons and if assistance is required Stratford Police Services can be contacted.

In response to Sub-committee questioning, it was noted that there are individuals missing from the By-Name List. Staff are continuously updating the list and recently completed a data clean up to ensure that the list is as accurate as possible. Staff reached out to various individuals who had gone inactive to determine where they are. Staff are always trying to improve the list and are working with various organizations to keep it as up to date as possible. It was noted that not all individuals were connected with during the 10 days, as prescribed by the Ministry, as many individuals did not respond to outreach workers or organizations.

The Chair requested that Police Chief Skinner provide an update on the mental health workers who assist the police service and how homelessness is handled. The Chief stated that in October of 2019, the Stratford Police Services Board partnered with the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance to initiate a program called MCERT, Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team. At that time, MCERT had one mental health crisis worker that was deployed from the hospital to ride along with police officers to respond to crisis situations. Over the past two years, the program has been able to expand to five crisis workers who ride along with officers in Huron County, Perth County and the City of Stratford. They not only provide support to individuals who are in a crisis but to family members who are currently

experiencing a crisis with a family member. MCERT is able to provide assistance in homes and on the streets to provide referrals and support.

The Police Chief stated that the police do not arrest individuals for being homeless. Often police will respond to an individual who is in crisis and in need of support. The officer may be transporting that individual to an appropriate safe space to get the support that they require. The Chief spoke about the misconception that if police are called to assist a person in crisis that it does not mean that the individual will be arrested. Not all situations warrant an arrest, or a charge being laid. The police are there to provide community support in crisis situations.

The Manager of Parks, Forestry and Cemetery stated that many of the encampments are on properties that his department manages including natural areas, parks and sports facilities. He indicated that his department coordinates specifically with Social Services when an encampment requires clean up. In response to Sub-committee questioning, the Manager of Parks, Forestry and Cemetery indicated that when his department attends the area to clean, most times the individuals have already taken everything that they want.

In response to Sub-committee questioning, the Manager of Ontario Works indicated that there is an option to decline to answer any questions on the survey and that there were four individuals who declined to answer the gender identity question. For the 11% of respondents who answered that they are currently unsheltered, they may have service restrictions or circumstances that cause them to be unsheltered.

Motion by Councillor Ritsma

Sub-committee Decision: THAT Ken Wood be heard.

Carried

Ken Wood stated that various banks downtown have locked their outer doors where individuals would often take refuge in the vestibule to get out of the cold. He questioned if the police have ever been called due to trespassing and laid charges. The Police Chief indicated that the Trespass to Property Act is not a criminal offence, it is provincial legislation that does have arrest authorities within the Act. The officers will respond to complaints and if there is a situation where trespassing has taken place, the individual will be served with a trespass notice as an attempt to make

the individual aware that the property owner does not want them on their property. Many areas with vestibules have been struggling with individuals who have taken refuge in these areas which has caused concerns from patrons who feel unsafe. The Police Chief advised that various property owners have locked the doors to alleviate the concerns from their patrons.

Mr. Wood questioned whether warming centers would be provided. The Manager of Ontario Works advised there is a Cold Weather Policy where staff connect with individuals who are outside and have them placed in an emergency shelter space or alternative space if there is a service restriction with the individual. Currently there is no Out of the Cold program but staff are actively working with individuals to get them into proper housing.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled "2021 Homeless Enumeration Results" (SOC22-001) be received for information.

Carried

6.2 Coordinated Response for those Unsheltered (SOC22-003)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Coordinated Response for those Unsheltered" (SOC22-003) be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Director of Social Services thanked Police Chief Skinner and Quin Malott, Manager of Parks, Forestry and Cemetery, for joining the presentation and for their contributions.

The Director of Social Services and the Manager of Ontario Works, referring to a PowerPoint presentation, provided information on the coordinated response for persons who are unsheltered. Highlights of the presentation include the following:

- There is an increase to unsheltered homelessness across the Service Manager catchment area, including the City of Stratford, Perth County and the Town of St. Marys.
- Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the department has seen an increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness.

- There has been an increase in urban encampments where individuals are residing within the downtown core of the City and in wooded areas or fields around the City.
- The Social Services Department operates housing-focused emergency accommodation programs for individuals and families while Shelterlink provides emergency shelter for youth in need.
- The Social Services Department coordinates and receives support from various City departments, Choices for Change, Stratford Police Services, community partners and other social service agencies.
- Outreach staff complete regular walkabouts of known encampment locations to connect with the individuals, provide check-ins, necessary supplies, referrals to support agencies and to ensure that the encampment is clean.
- The Social Services team and partner agencies continue to work towards a more permanent housing solution for individuals living unsheltered.

In response to Sub-committee questioning, the Director of Social Services stated that the application for the Rapid Housing initiative was not successful this second round but staff are hopeful to receive funding in the future. The funding was for capital costs and the operating costs would be ongoing. The housing units that were through the SHOPP program in St. Marys and Listowel included capital and operational costs.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Decision: THAT Ken Wood be heard.

Carried

Ken Wood expressed appreciation for staff taking the time to explain the intent and being in depth with the presentation. He advised members of Sub-committee and staff to look at the various Stratford Facebook pages to see what citizens are suggesting for ideas and possible solutions to help the homelessness population.

Motion by Councillor Vassilakos

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Coordinated Response for those Unsheltered" (SOC22-003) be received for information.

Carried

7. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

The Chair requested that Ryan Erb, Executive Director of the Perth-Huron United Way, provide an update on the services they provide. Mr. Erb stated that many individuals are utilizing the services that are being offered by the United Way and Choices for Change. There has been an overwhelming amount of donations being dropped off to Choices for Change including hats, coats, socks and mittens. He reminded citizens to contact the organization prior to dropping off a donation to ensure that they can accept it. The renovations are scheduled to begin in February to have showers installed, laundry on site and storage added. The quotes that have been submitted have been higher than anticipated but they are looking at donations to help cover the remaining costs.

Members of Sub-committee and staff expressed their appreciation and gratefulness to the internal and external community partners for their continuous support. Ryan Erb stated that fundraising has been going well for the centre and that monetary donations are still being accepted. A link has been added to the main page of the United Way's webpage for direct designated donations.

In response to Sub-committee questioning, Mr. Erb indicated that the quotes range from \$80,000.00 to \$100,000.00.

Councillor Ritsma provided two phone numbers, 519-271-6730 or 226-921-5235, for citizens to call if they wish to make a physical donation to the United Way to ensure that staff are available to receive the donation.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Bunting

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

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 5:48 P.M.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 11, 2022
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Darren Barkhouse, Manager of Children's Services
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: SOC22-002
Attachments: None

Title: Information on Workforce Funding for Child Care and Early Years

Objective: To provide Council with an update on the recently announced Federal funding to support the recruitment and retention of qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs)

Background: The Federal Government of Canada has provided the Province of Ontario, \$147 million through a one-time Workforce Fund that is aimed at helping support the overwhelming shortage of qualified RECEs in the child care and early years system across the Province. Each of the 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) reporting through the Province have been provided an allocation based on current capacity, with the City of Stratford receiving \$450,287 for 2022, and an additional \$120,000 for the first quarter of 2023. The Ministry has provided spending guidelines and stipulations to adhere to, most specifically being these funds cannot be used for any sort of compensation or financial gain for employees. Each CMSM submitted a two-page proposal for the use of their allocation on December 10th, 2021.

Analysis: Currently, the CMSM is approximately 80 full time RECEs short of obtaining full license capacity across all child care centres, before and after school programs, and EarlyON Children and Family Centres. While some of this figure is tied to the impacts of Covid-19, the vast majority is due to a shortage of RECEs in our area (and across Ontario) and the pressure that comes with keeping current staff in the industry due to low wages and benefits. We are optimistic that we will be back to pre-pandemic capacity by the end of 2022 and into early 2023, however this hinges solely on our ability to secure a long-term plan for the staffing shortages plaguing the field. Upon consultation with our service providers, we have identified several strategies and opportunities that align with Ministry mandates, including mental health support and resources, increased awareness for professional learning, supporting diversity and inclusion, sustainable work practices, and access to up-to-date technology and virtual

supports. As we plan out the next 15 months into early 2023, we hope to support our current and future educators equally and responsibly while adhering to Ministry objectives.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

The Workforce Funding (\$450,287) is provided 100% by the Federal Government and distributed by the Province of Ontario. There are no financial obligations by the City of Stratford aside from staff time to work on rolling out all initiatives attached to this funding line.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

The Workforce funding continues into the first quarter of 2023, with an additional \$120,000 committed.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Developing our Resources

Optimizing Stratford's physical assets and digital resources. Planning a sustainable future for Stratford's resources and environment.

Widening our Economic Opportunities

Strengthening Stratford's economy by developing, attracting, and retaining a diversity of businesses and talent.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities, and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Information on Workforce Funding for Child Care and Early Years" (SOC22-002) be received for information.

Prepared by: Darren Barkhouse, Manager of Children's Services
Recommended by: Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 11, 2022
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Jeneane Fast, Housing Stability Policy and Program Coordinator
 Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: SOC22-001
Attachments: 2021 Homeless Enumeration Results - Infographic

Title: 2021 Homeless Enumeration Results

Objective: To inform Council of the results of the 2021 homeless enumeration.

Background: To meet a Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) requirement, the City of Stratford, as Service Manager for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys, conducted a homeless enumeration from November 1 – 10, the methodology of which was outlined in a previous management report (SOC21-010). This report highlights the results of that enumeration.

Analysis: The enumeration gathered population-level data on people experiencing homelessness on the night of October 30. In total, 118 people experiencing homelessness completed the enumeration survey. However, because not every household experiencing homelessness in the area completed a survey during the enumeration timeframe, the actual number of households experiencing homelessness at the end of October according to the By-Name List was 164. Furthermore, while the homeless enumeration offered a snapshot of homelessness on one night, the By-Name List, which is updated monthly, remains the most reliable and accurate source of homelessness data locally.

The following results are based exclusively on the information provided by the 118 survey respondents:

- 63% were provisionally accommodated (in temporary housing situations - transitional housing, staying with friends or family, in provincial institutions such as jail or hospital)
- 69% were experiencing chronic homelessness (experienced homelessness for 6+ months in the previous year)

- 70% were single
- The average age was 38
- 24% identified as being part of a racialized group (including Indigenous)
- 9% identified as LGBTQ2S
- 3% identified as not cisgender
- 2% had past military service
- 86% reported having a mental health issue
- 56% reported having a substance use issue
- 53% reported interpersonal issues as a reason for their loss of housing
- 82% were in receipt of some form of government assistance

For more detailed results, please refer to the attached infographic.

Financial Implications:

Not applicable:

There are no financial implications to be reported as a result of this report.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Other

Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys (2020-2024)

"Collecting and using reliable, local data to make informed decisions" is one of the four implementation drivers moving the Plan's strategic objectives forward.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "2021 Homeless Enumeration Results" (SOC22-001) be received for information.

Prepared by: Jeneane Fast, Housing Stability Policy & Program
Coordinator

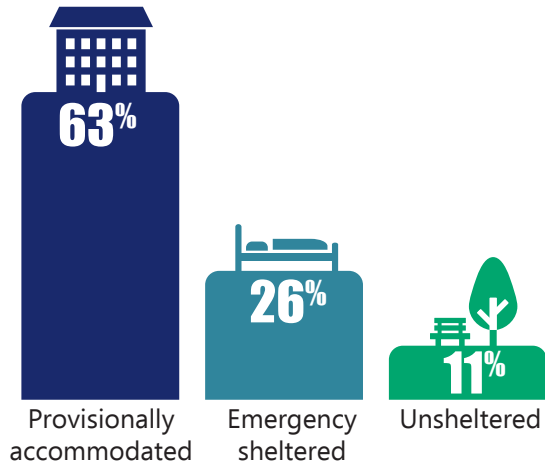
Recommended by: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer

2021¹⁸ Homeless Enumeration Results

Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys

*Based on **118 survey respondents** who were experiencing homelessness on October 30th, 2021*

Current Living Situation

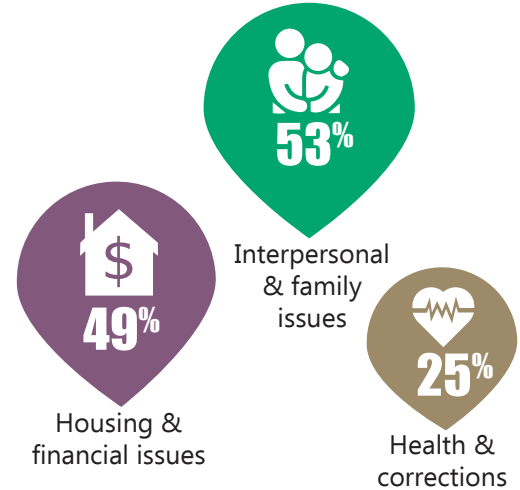


69%
Chronically homeless

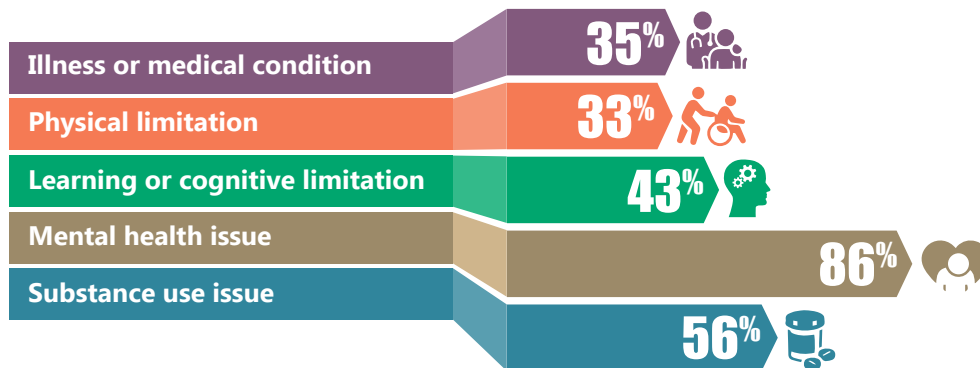
38
Average age

2%
served in the **military** or **RCMP**

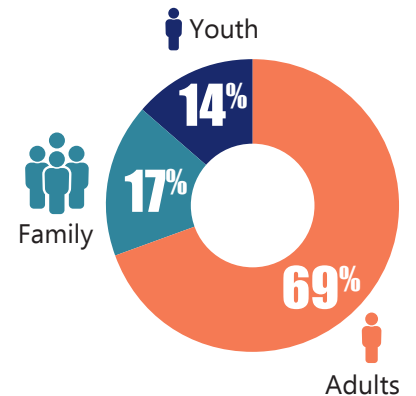
Reasons for Homelessness



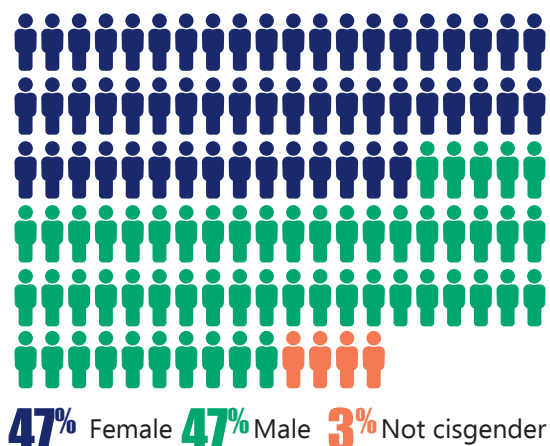
Risk Factors



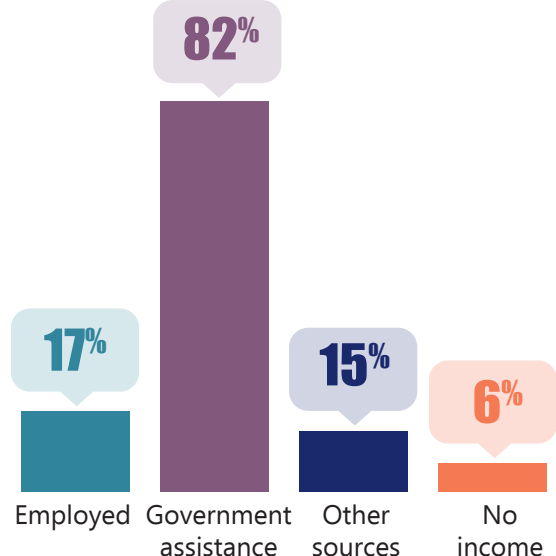
Household Composition



Gender Identity



Sources of Income



9%
identified as **LGBTQ2S+**

10%
identified as **Indigenous**

14%
identified as **racialized**



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 11, 2022
To: Social Services Sub-Committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: SOC22-003
Attachments: Coordinated Response for those Unsheltered Presentation

Title: Coordinated Response for those Unsheltered

Objective: To provide Council and citizens with information regarding the City of Stratford's coordinated response to unsheltered homelessness.

Background: The City of Stratford Social Services Department is the legislated Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for Stratford, Perth County and St Marys. Part of the responsibilities as CMSM includes the provision of homelessness and housing stability services across the Service Manager catchment area. As detailed in report SOC21-013, the Social Services Outreach Worker program currently provides street outreach services to the catchment area. The report also details the services that will now be provided through Choices for Change regarding the Housing Focused Street Outreach Program.

The increase in unsheltered homelessness in Stratford and surrounding areas is not isolated to this area, but rather is greatly affecting municipalities across Ontario and Canada. As a member of Built-for-Zero Canada, the City of Stratford and BFZ-C partners are working together to address chronic homelessness across the country and support the most vulnerable citizens who are impacted by the increase in visible and unsheltered homelessness.

The enumeration report being put forth this month provides further details about the current landscape of homelessness in our community. There is work being done by several community agencies to implement a Coordinated Access System which will better align housing resources with the people who need it most. The Coordinated Access System is intended to link all component parts together to form a coordinated community response for those experiencing homelessness and work together to address and remove barriers to permanent housing. The CASLG will develop a community approach to co-ordination and care that includes mapping and leveraging all

the existing resources and expertise to achieve optimal housing placements and supports for those experiencing homelessness in Perth County.

The Coordinated Access Leadership Group (CASLG) is a community partnership which meets monthly and currently has representation from the following agencies:

- Canadian Mental Health Association Huron-Perth
- Choices for Change
- City of Stratford Social Services Department (Co-Chair)
- Emily Murphy Centre
- Huron Perth Public Health
- Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance
- John Howard Society of London & District
- Ontario Provincial Police
- Optimism Place
- Stratford/Perth Shelterlink
- Stratford Police
- United Way Perth/Huron (Co-Chair)
- Community Living – Stratford

Analysis: The Coordinated Response for Unsheltered Homelessness is detailed in the attached presentation and focuses on four primary cornerstones:

- 1) Coordination and Collaboration
- 2) Proactive Outreach and Connection to Services
- 3) Cleaning, Maintenance and Support
- 4) Homelessness Prevention

The coordinated response provides details regarding how to report an individual living unsheltered, what the response will look like and what services are offered.

To report an encampment, please call 519-271-3773 ext. 200 and advise you are reporting an encampment or unsheltered individual. City staff will take the appropriate information including location/address, a physical description of the site, number of individuals or description of individuals at site. Please be advised that due to privacy and confidentiality of citizens in our community, we cannot disclose reasons such as why they may be living unsheltered, what emergency accommodations are available or what are the next steps being taken.

If citizens are wanting to donate to individuals who are experiencing homelessness in our community, please contact the United Way, or a local not-for-profit who works with individuals experiencing homelessness to ask about how you can help.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

The current program being delivered is within the allocated operating budget.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

Funding for applicable programs is included within the 2022 operating budget.

Other:

Funding for the Choices for Change Housing Focused Street Outreach program was provided through the Social Services Relief Fund, as detailed in report SOC21-013.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:**Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships**

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Widening our Economic Opportunities

Strengthening Stratford's economy by developing, attracting, and retaining a diversity of businesses and talent.

Other**Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys (2020-2024)**

"Collaboration with service providers and community agencies," is one of the four implementation drivers moving the Plan's strategic objectives forward and "Developing coordinated mobile outreach across the Service Manager area," is one of the recommended activities for Strategic Objective #1, Ending Homelessness.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:**Health and Happiness**

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities, and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Coordinated Response for those Unsheltered" (SOC22-003) 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

Coordinated Response for those Unsheltered

City of Stratford – Social Services Department
Social Services Sub-Committee
January 11, 2021

What is Happening?

- There is an increase to unsheltered homelessness across the Service Manager catchment area, including the City of Stratford, Perth County and Town of St Marys.
- Unsheltered homelessness, also known as visible homelessness or sleeping rough, is not only a concern in Stratford, but continues to be a concern across the Province of Ontario.
- The City of Stratford receives Provincial Funding through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to provide homelessness and housing stability services.
- Since the onset of COVID-19, the Department has seen an increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness, including those who are precariously housed, accessing emergency shelter or those who are unsheltered.

Local Definition of Homelessness

The local definition is adopted from the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness:

Homelessness describes the situation of an individual, family or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, unhealthy, unsafe, stressful and distressing.

Local Definition of Homelessness continued

- Experiences of homelessness are categorized into four typologies including households who are:
 - Unsheltered, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation.
 - Emergency sheltered, including those staying in overnight shelters for people who are experiencing homelessness, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence.
 - Provisionally accommodated, referring to those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure. This includes individuals who are staying temporarily with family and/or friends (e.g. "couch surfing"), living in temporary rental accommodations (e.g. motels), or those who currently in an institution (e.g. jail, hospital, rehabilitation centre) and have no place to live upon their release.
 - At risk of homelessness, referring to people who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/ or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.

In Stratford 1 of 3

- There has been an increase in urban encampments whereby individuals are residing within the downtown core of the City.
- Encampments are also present in more remote areas of the community, often in wooded areas or fields around the City.

In Stratford 2 of 3

- Unsheltered Homelessness is exacerbated by factors such as:
 - Untreated mental illness
 - Increased risks due to substance use
 - Lack of suitable housing options
 - Decreased affordability of private market housing
 - Lack of informal housing options (Couch surfing, room rentals)
 - Difficult behaviours in emergency shelter settings that impact safety of staff and other program participants.

In Stratford 3 of 3

- Unsheltered Homelessness can be problematic in the community due to:
 - Disruptive behaviours
 - Vandalism, excessive garbage and human waste
 - Disruption to or trespassing on private property
 - Urban camping causing a disruption to businesses in the downtown core.

What is being done?

- The Social Services Department operates a housing-focused emergency accommodations program utilizing local motels for individuals and families (age 25+) in need of emergency shelter.
- Shelterlink provides emergency shelter services for youth in need; ages 16-24.
- Social Services Outreach staff do proactive street outreach to individuals sleeping rough as well as responding to information provided by citizens and businesses regarding possible encampments or individuals living unsheltered.
- The Social Services Department has funded Choices for Change to deliver a housing-focused street outreach program to provide increased supports for those unsheltered.

What is being done? Continued

- Encampments and urban camping in the downtown core requires a complex response to ensure the individuals are supported and the voices of concerned business and citizens are heard.
- The coordinated response involves ensuring coordination amongst service providers, proactive outreach and connection of unsheltered individuals to services, cleaning and maintenance of identified encampments and homelessness prevention to ensure residents are supported in safe and suitable accommodations.

What is a Coordinated Response?



City of Stratford Social Services Department

82 Erie Street, Stratford, ON N5A 2M4 • 519-271-3773 ext. 200 • www.stratford.ca



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Our Response to Unsheltered Homelessness

- Coordination involves action and support from:
 - Social Services Department
 - Choices for Change
 - Stratford Police
 - Other City Departments
 - Community Partners and Social Service Agencies

Role of Social Services Department

- The Social Services Department is responsible for coordination of support amongst service providers for individuals sleeping rough. This includes:
 - Homelessness prevention and housing stability services
 - Emergency accommodations program
 - Proactive outreach to unsheltered individuals
 - Provision of basic needs and financial support

Coordination and Collaboration

- Once an encampment or individual sleeping rough is identified, please contact the City of Stratford Social Services Department.
 - Please call 519-271-3773 ext. 200 and advise you are reporting an encampment. City staff will take the appropriate information including location/address, a physical description of the site, number of individuals or description of individuals at site and will request photos (if they are available).
 - Staff will follow-up with the caller if additional details are required or permission to access the location of the encampment is needed.
- Other City departments, Police and partner agencies will provide details regarding active or potential encampments to Social Services to ensure a coordinated and appropriate response.

If there is an immediate safety concern or you feel your safety is being threatened at any time, please contact the Stratford Police or call 911

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Proactive Outreach + Connection to Services

- Outreach staff complete regular walk-abouts of known encampment locations to connect with individuals currently living unsheltered. Regularity of visits depends on individual case plan and willingness of individual to engage with Social Services staff.
- When an individual is unsheltered and the Outreach team are made aware, they respond accordingly.
- When made aware of an encampment through any channel (Public complaint, Police contact, Partner agency), Social Services staff map the location/site and either attend within 72 hours of being notified or contact Choices for Change Outreach staff to attend the location.
- When a member of an outreach team attends, they will:
 - Attempt to make contact with the individual residing at the encampment, varying time of day and day of the week if they are unsuccessful with initial contact.

Proactive Outreach + Connection to Services Continued

- Provide a compassionate and caring response, ensuring basic needs are being met, ensuring the individual is connected to the local By-Name List and reviewing eligibility for applicable services. This may include offering available services including emergency accommodations and financial support as well as referrals to community agencies.
- Work collaboratively with community partners, using a housing first approach, to ensure there is an immediate focus on securing permanent housing. This may include a focus on short-term accommodations until permanent housing can be secured.
- Protect and promote the well-being and safety of those unsheltered, members of the public and agency staff.
- Completing regular follow-ups and scheduled meetings with the individual who continues to reside at encampment.

Cleaning, Maintenance and Support

- Outreach staff conduct regular check-ins with individuals living unsheltered and work with them to ensure the encampment is clean and maintenance is maintained.
 - The outreach program is voluntary and while we cannot impose any restrictions related to cleanliness, staff work with the individual to address safety concerns and concerns related to clutter or garbage at the encampment.
- Outreach staff provide necessary supplies and referrals to individuals to ensure they are able to maintain their encampment in a safe and suitable manner.
- Once an encampment is no longer active, there can be concerns around the items and materials left behind. Inactive encampments can be unsafe due to the garbage that is left behind.
- When an encampment is identified as inactive and the individual has secured alternate accommodations, Social Services will work with the individual to remove all belongings.
- If garbage or belongings are left behind, Social Services will contact the applicable City department (IDS or Community Services) to request the encampment be cleaned up within an appropriate timeframe.
 - Social Services will request approval from senior leadership before an encampment clean-up is requested and completed.
- Methods of clean-up used will ensure the health and safety of all staff involved.

Homelessness Prevention

- The Social Services Department, in partnership with community agencies, continue to work toward improved homelessness prevention and housing stability programs. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Financial assistance to stay in your home (i.e. arrears, short-term housing allowances)
 - Financial assistance to obtain a home (i.e. Last Month's rent, Moving/Furniture expenses)
 - Case management support for individuals facing eviction
 - Referrals to mental health and addictions supports to help stay in your home
 - Referrals to community partners for support with cleaning, hoarding and housekeeping issues

Next Steps

- The Social Services Department, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, will continue to review the unsheltered response and address immediate concerns.
- Using a Housing First approach, the Social Services team and partner agencies will continue to work toward more permanent housing solutions for individuals living unsheltered.