

<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MARCH 30, 2016</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>SANDRA DATARS BERE, MANAGING DIRECTOR, HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND DEARNESS HOME</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO SITUATIONS OF POTENTIAL VULNERABLE OCCUPANCIES</b>

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
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That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Housing, Social Services, and Dearness Home, the following update report on responses to unsafe housing conditions of vulnerable occupancy **BE RECEIVED** for information purposes noting that Civic Administration will proceed with ongoing steps to implement the attached Vulnerable Occupancy Protocol with the various community stakeholders as outlined within this report.

<b>PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER</b>
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February 24, 2015: Municipal Council; Resolution related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Report of the London Housing Advisory Committee

March 20, 2015: Community and Protective Services Committee; Update on Responses to Unsafe Housing Conditions of Vulnerable Persons

<b>BACKGROUND</b>
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Access to stable accommodations is critical to all members of our community, especially for those who may be living in vulnerable health and housing conditions.

On November 3, 2014, a fatal fire at 1451 Oxford Street heightened attention to issues related to substandard housing conditions and support services considerations that exist within our community, especially as they relate to persons living in poverty and with complex health related vulnerability. Subsequent to this event, a number of community based actions were initiated and have continued related to understanding, advocating, and responding to these situations.

Following this event, the City Manager hosted discussions with local sector stakeholders to assess needs and better understand issues related to vulnerable occupancy.

On January 14, 2015, through community delegation discussions at the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the London Housing Advisory Committee, the Committee advanced a recommendation to Municipal Council related to the fire event and by-law areas for follow-up action. On Feb 24, 2015, Municipal Council directed Civic Administration on actions related to reviewing the Business Licensing By-law as it relates to this matter.

In response to Council's direction and other community based actions, City staff initiated community agency meetings to begin mapping out the issues, needs, and options and on May 20, 2015, a community delegation and Civic Administration report to Community and Protective Services Committee outlined the initial response activities and the formalization of a working group chartering a revised scope and strategy. This revised approach was approved by Municipal Council on May 26, 2015.

Since then, considerable efforts have been taken to advance a new service delivery model and practices between participating agencies and service areas, including activities to pilot these approaches in subsequent events involving vulnerable occupancies.

### **Relation to City's Strategic Plan:**

Actions undertaken within these processes have been aligned within Council's Strategic Direction under "Strengthening Our Community through Caring and Compassionate Services" as this work directly contributes to the goals of:

- 3A *"Eliminate barriers for individuals facing poverty, mental health, and addictions and help them find pathways to be successful"; and*
- 3B *"Working with community agencies to help tenants keep their existing affordable housing and avoid homelessness".*

In addition to this, the City's ongoing involvement in managing and responding to events such as fires has continued to advance emergency responses to vulnerable persons impacted and displaced in these events. Advancing work in these response measures were not initially a part of this initiative, but have subsequently been included in the Strategic Plan for the City of London (and are reflected within the initial findings and final action plans in Appendix A and C).

### **Scope:**

With concurrence of Municipal Council (CPS May 20, 2015), the scope of this work was defined to address needs associated with measures related to **PERSONS/OCCUPANTS LIVING INDEPENDENTLY in VULNERABLE HOUSING CONDITIONS**. Independent living does not include persons in housing directly supported, delivered, or funded housing programs nor does it directly address other issues (such as poverty) that may also contribute to a person's vulnerability.

The revised approach advanced through a community Working Group (see below) recognized that there have been many unique situations related to persons who may be considered vulnerable that deal with the physical shelter environment, nature of supports, and behaviours of individuals – all of which may contribute to vulnerability.

### **Community Working Group:**

The Working Group guided the approach with discussions focused on the existence of unregulated supports to congregate living (as was the case in the Oxford St. fire). The group identified concerns related to a variety of vulnerable and unsafe conditions and scenarios and looked more broadly at situations and supports to vulnerable persons living independently (i.e. outside of supportive housing services of a licensed agency). This work was undertaken within the following framework:

*Goal Statement:* Creating a sustainable community-based response to support stable housing conditions of vulnerable persons living independently in our communities.

*Outcome Focus:* Increasing safe and stable housing conditions for vulnerable persons.

*Approach:* Establish a Community Strategy and Sustainable Action Plan.

A facilitator was contracted to assist in the meetings and separate engagement tables and key informant discussions. [Attached](#), Appendix A is a high level overview of "Initial Working Group Findings and Action Plans" emerging from these forums and discussions.

### **Initial Framework:**

The initial meeting of the community Working Group held May 7, 2015 established four interactive areas for discussion and review:

- Formal Community Safeguards* Laws, regulations, and standards that exist or that may be required related to increasing the safety and reducing the vulnerability of populations at risk.
- Informal Community Safeguards* Agency protocols, neighbourhood-based practices and resources and supports to reduce vulnerable living conditions for target populations.
- Formal Personal Safeguards* Laws and practices related to intervention and individualized support plans for persons or households at risk.
- Informal Personal Safeguards* Practices, safety devices, and resources to support individual tenants, neighbours, families, and friends in their awareness and support of safe living conditions.
- Integrated Community Response* The "backbone" structure of aligned agencies and partners to focus on project management, continuous improvement, and sustainability of the goals.

**Preliminary Actions:**

From early 2015, the Working Group and community dialogue created heightened attention and response to potential situations of vulnerability across the city. Increased contacts from both the general public and from social and health agencies related to potential situations were received through By-law Enforcement.

**Initial Recommendations:**

Through the ongoing Working Group and other meetings, community discussions, literature reviews of other jurisdictions, and key informant discussions, a revised model for responding to potential vulnerable occupancy concerns was developed.

The work conducted through the community meetings and interviews resulted in a large number of recommended actions, many of which were either already informally underway or that could be aligned with other existing related initiatives. Overall, the recommendations recognized 5 areas of need but focused on specific activities. (See APPENDIX C: Final Recommendations for details). These included:

- i) *Support the licensing review that is already underway, to include business activities associated with congregate living that is not otherwise regulated or funded by governments;*
- ii) *Support the establishment of a “situation table” that combines enforcement and service providers to address complex and urgent needs of identified vulnerable occupancy. The “situation table” will be further supported by a leadership table of those involved lead agencies and include responsibilities for public awareness, communication, supports and training, and evaluation – inclusive of follow-up/debriefing of specific situations.*
- iii) *Support the above leadership table to engage in other existing forums and networks to advance formal and informal approaches and tools that bring direct health, social, and housing support providers together in the resolution of situations of vulnerable occupancy and unsafe housing with a focus on safety, dignity, and supports through formal and informal practices and protocols.*
- iv) *Support the continued deployment and use of these tools across sectors that engage with vulnerable persons.*
- v) *Support the development of new community based service protocols that assist persons displaced by a crisis event AFTER the work of the Reception Centre has concluded. This work will focus on stabilizing their return to their housing or the rapid rehousing needs of vulnerable persons.*

**Initial Pilot:**

Concurrent with this work and based on learning from past situations of unsafe housing, municipal enforcement staff initiated actions to better co-ordinate their services. Municipal By-law Enforcement, Fire Prevention, and Public Health (Middlesex London Health Unit) initiated a process to work more collaboratively related to potential vulnerable occupancy situations. The pilot initiative was referred to as “Top 5” and was similar to actions employed in the enforcement of restaurants and tobacco sales related licensing and by-laws.

Borrowed from these similar approaches, “Top 5” was an initiative to better understand, assess, and respond to situations of shared agency involvement but with separate accountabilities for compliance and authority. The “Top 5” initiative involved cross-training between each enforcement area by sharing legislative and compliance requirements and authorities of the respective offices so that, when any agent was called to a situation, an event could be assessed through multiple perspectives and support authorized communications and action.

The Top 5 approach helped advance better assessments and resolutions of situations and also reinforced the needs identified through the Working Group; especially related to enforcement areas and support agency staff working together within their existing roles, duties, and authorities. It also supported the need for a table for debriefing situations and supporting continued learning.

Together, these strategies and recommendations defined a new model for a Vulnerable Occupancy Protocol which has been undergoing informal testing through ongoing events.

## **Vulnerable Occupancy Protocol (VOP) Response Strategy (Appendix D)**

The attached Vulnerable Occupancy Protocol Response Strategy (or VOP) establishes a closer direct working relationship between service providers most closely engaged in responses to vulnerable occupancy. It is intended to address the safety of individual tenants or occupants or a group together in one residence where the physical state of the residence or the behaviours within it are putting existing vulnerable people at risk.

A small core group of agencies and service providers has come together consisting of representatives of:

1. Enforcement Based Organizations (City of London By-law Enforcement Officers, Middlesex London Health Unit Public Health Officers, City of London Fire Prevention Officers, with support and assistance of London Police Services);  
and
2. Community Support Agencies involved in supporting vulnerable individuals with complex needs experiencing housing insecurity or pending homelessness (London CARES, City of London Social Service, Canadian Mental Health Association – Middlesex, and Mission Services London, and City of London Homeless Prevention).

These agencies have worked together in past situations of vulnerable occupancies (i.e. persons residing in abandoned/vacant buildings); however, the protocol establishes improved co-ordination of activities, communications, assessments, collaborative approaches, and debriefing plans. This approach also leverages the ability to access connections to other services and supports available to assist those in need. The protocol does not create new authorities, governance bodies or organizations, or capacities beyond those of existing resources working more effectively together.

A situation and leadership table will be formally established to debrief incidents and advance communications and learnings through other existing community social and health networks.

### **Other Related Actions:**

#### Update to the City of London Business Licensing By-law

Work continues related to the updating of the Business Licensing By-law (L-6). Currently, Part 11 of the by-law references the licensing and compliance requirements associated with Lodging Houses. These facilities do not include services and activities that support individuals living independently in congregate environments.

A report on the updated Business Licensing By-law is anticipated in 2016 (Q2).

#### Emergency Social Services Recovery Plan

As identified in the City of London Strategic Plan, work has begun on the development of an enhanced emergency social services “recovery plan” to ensure continued supports to vulnerable persons displaced or impacted by an emergency event, including those involving a reception centre.

The activities of the “recovery plan” will dovetail with this protocol along with other services and strategies advanced through the community’s Homeless Prevention System plans.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

Based on activities to date, the following are the next steps in this process:

1. Formalization of the protocols with partners through regular meetings and debriefing;
2. Continue the existing approach with potential vulnerable occupancy situations using the call out protocol;
3. Finalize work on the Emergency Social Services Recovery Plan and Business Licensing By-law;
4. Establish a public communication plan related to these activities in support of family and neighbours of persons potentially living in vulnerable conditions;
5. Provide public updates as available through existing reporting to Municipal Council.

<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT</b>
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There is no current budget or financial impact with this report. There is no anticipated resource requirements associated with this plan, recognizing the strategy advances improved communication and coordination between service providers. Ongoing assessments will determine if additional resources are required, noting that training and communication will be initiated within existing service area budgets.

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
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**Acknowledgments:**

This report has relied on the contributions of numerous community advocates, agencies, and individuals who have directly and indirectly provided their comments, interests, and concerns to City staff and community Working Group members.

City staff are grateful for the support and engagement of the community work group and situation table participants. Community stakeholders involved in this initiative have been extremely participatory and helpful in this process and are willing to share information give advice, and continue to be interested in developing community approaches to addressing the issues.

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**Appendices:**

- A: Initial Working Group Findings and Action Plans**
- B: Final Recommendations**
- C: Vulnerable Occupancy Protocol (VOP)**

**APPENDIX A:  
Initial Working Group Findings and Action Plans**

AREA	FINDINGS AND ACTION PLANS
<p><b>1. INTEGRATED SITUATION RESPONSE TABLE</b></p> <p><b>GOAL:</b> Reduce the life risks associated with vulnerable individuals living independently in <u>unsafe housing conditions</u> with numerous risk factors, <i>AND/OR</i> presenting numerous <u>risk factors behaviours</u> impacting their safe living conditions (or those around them) and that cross multiple sectors.</p>	<p><b>FINDINGS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Need for social/health supports and enforcement supports to work together.</li> <li>2. Improved co-ordinated actions taking place related to “enforcement partners” (Top 5)</li> <li>3. Protocols already in place between key health and social services (under various programs and service activities through formal letters of understanding and client releases).</li> <li>4. Various communities (Oxford and Prince Albert SA) are involved in pilot projects related to situation tables for vulnerable person response.</li> </ol> <p><b>ACTION PLAN:</b> Create a Community Mobilization/Situation Table inclusive of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Key agency MOU</li> <li>2. Interagency protocols inclusive of common language and definitions of elevated risk, procedures, training, and communications</li> <li>3. Meeting terms of reference (Shared approach, vision, etc)</li> <li>4. Tracking tool (inclusive of situation and analysis).</li> <li>5. Evaluation process</li> </ol> <p>A multidisciplinary "Situation Table" would identify, rapidly develop and deploy real time interventions and short term solutions to situations of vulnerable individuals living in unsafe housing conditions. The Table would establish a “rapid response protocol” for emergency situations as well as a regular review strategy for the ongoing management of complex situations.</p>
<p><b>2. PREVENTATIVE RISK ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p><b>GOAL:</b> Prevent situations of vulnerable living conditions at point of assessment, especially assessments related to persons exiting facilities, shelters, or institutions into independent community living.</p>	<p><b>FINDINGS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work being done under the Homeless Prevention System related to needs assessments for vulnerable persons exiting criminal justice/jails, hospitals, and shelters and to assist in linking to appropriate support services are available.</li> <li>2. Common assessment tools are being implemented in various sectors related to Housing First approaches to service delivery.</li> </ol> <p><b>ACTION PLAN:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Align preventative risk assessment tools specifically for vulnerable persons identified as <u>already living independently</u> and who may have bypassed or not been a recipient of any discharge planning related to housing.</li> <li>2. Align with work already being done in the community related to advancing assessment tools including specific needs of vulnerable persons (within the context of this initiative) to <u>agencies that provide secondary services after a discharge</u> (Eg. home health care, meal programs, and trusteeship programs).</li> </ol> <p>Common tools and protocols for various sectors engaged with vulnerable persons planning a move to independent living will help identify and address safety, risks, and aligning services.</p>

AREA	FINDINGS AND ACTION PLANS
<p><b>3. LICENCING AND ENFORCEMENT</b></p> <p><b>GOAL:</b> Ensure appropriate rules and regulations are in place related to businesses serving or supporting the congregated housing of vulnerable persons living independently in the community.</p>	<p><b>FINDINGS:</b> A review of the City’s Business Licensing By-law is already underway. The review of this by-law includes consideration of businesses that directly support housing services or congregate living outside of the existing group and lodging home considerations.</p> <p><b>ACTION PLAN:</b> Aligning bylaws, licencing and regulations that overlap in areas of supporting safety of housing conditions or the safety of vulnerable occupants of housing, where sector specific (eg. supportive housing, group homes, etc.) or other living specific rules do not apply.</p>
<p><b>4. RAPID REACTION - EMERGENCY SOCIAL SUPPORTS</b></p> <p><b>GOAL:</b> Formalize practices related to emergency social service activities</p>	<p><b>FINDINGS:</b> This is work the City will lead through a separate process to formalize practices after a hand-off from an emergency reception centre event (fire etc.) and to engage community based emergency social services when vulnerable tenants have been displaced. Again, this is a separate table that we will create.</p> <p><b>ACTION PLAN:</b> This work was included within the City’s Strategic Plan and is being separately actioned through the Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home.</p>
<p><b>5. BACKBONE LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p><b>GOAL:</b> Processes and structures required to support the situation table and associated activities through a leadership group.</p>	<p><b>FINDINGS:</b> Other tables exist which may or may not have capacity to oversee the activities of a situation table. If also overseeing Emergency Social Services, a separate table may be required.</p> <p><b>ACTION PLAN:</b> Establish a process for the situation table to debrief events and follow-up.</p> <p>Establish a leadership table as to oversee recommendations associated with No. 4 and 5 and support the needs and functions of the Situation Table, community protocols, etc., and link to other tables to avoid duplication and support integrated community support strategies.</p> <p>Support communications and engagement plans, evaluative tools, and reporting.</p>

## **APPENDIX B: Final Recommendations**

The work conducted through the community meetings and interviews resulted in a large number of recommended actions, many of which were either already informally underway or that could be aligned with other existing related initiatives. Overall, the recommendations recognized 5 categories of needs:

### **1. Licensing:**

Although there was agreement that there are considerable existing rules, by-laws, and regulations governing the safety of housing, there remained gaps in clarity related to licensing of business activities associated with supporting or providing congregate living.

#### **Response:**

These issues are being considered in a review being conducted by Development and Compliance Services related to the Business Licensing By-law.

#### **Action:**

- i. *Continue the licensing review underway at the City, to include business activities associated with congregate living.*

### **2. Enforcement and Supports Working Together:**

Enforcement related activities (health, by-law, and fire prevention) had already initiated new approaches in working together in situations of vulnerable occupancy and substandard housing. In events where new approaches were being practiced, agency officers were already better able to identify and address issues of shared concern. An identified gap is the capacity for enforcement agencies to work more closely with health/housing/social service providers needed to assist vulnerable occupants within their existing roles and authorities.

Similarly, over the course of the past year, there have been more occurrences of substandard housing identified by health/housing/social service providers to enforcement agencies without a clear and consistent understanding of how and when the sharing of these situations are appropriate. Service delivery practices, laws, and rules must be considered in the sharing of personal information related to safe occupancy.

#### **Responses:**

These issues are common to many jurisdictions, and are being addressed through new collaborative approaches that support enforcement and service providers working together. This approach requires clear memorandums of understanding, common language and protocols, community based training, and mechanisms to share and respond to situations quickly and with all appropriate discretions.

#### **Action:**

- ii. *Support the establishment of a “situation table” that combines enforcement and service providers to address complex and urgent needs of identified vulnerable occupancy and supports rapid responses when needed. The “situation table” will be further supported by a Leadership Table of those involved agencies and include responsibilities for public awareness, communication, supports and training, and evaluation – inclusive of follow-up/debriefing of specific situations.*
- iii. *Support the Leadership Table to engage in other existing forums and networks to advance formal and informal approaches and tools that bring direct health, social, and housing support providers together in the resolution of situations of vulnerable occupancy and unsafe housing with a focus on safety, dignity, and supports through formal and informal protocols.*

### **3. Alignment of Other Associated Initiatives**

There are two key initiatives that align with the work of responding to the safe and stable housing conditions of vulnerable persons:

- a. Assessments for individuals exiting facilities or institutions into independent community living, and.
- b. Advancing work on the Emergency Social Services Plan as identified within the Strategic Plan for the City of London 2015-2019.



**Responses:**

Considerable work is being done locally within the Homeless Prevention System related to internationally recognized evidence based mechanisms to reduce and respond to risk to persons experiencing homelessness and can assist in advancing specific tools to identify and support vulnerable persons who may be at imminent risk of homelessness within a Housing First Approach.

Related to Emergency Social Services - through recent events requiring the establishment of Reception Centres under the City’s Emergency Social Services Plan, much was learned about the after-care requirements and re-stabilization and rehousing needs of persons displaced by a crisis event who likely were previously living in vulnerable or unsafe conditions.

Community agencies were supportive of efforts to assist displaced individuals and families - especially those where pre-existing vulnerability may have been a factor in the stability or safety of their housing.

**Action:**

- iv. *Support the continued deployment and use of these tools across sectors that engage with vulnerable persons.*
  
- v. *Support the development of new community based service protocols that assist persons displaced by a crisis event AFTER the work of the Reception Centre has concluded. This work will focus on stabilizing their return to their housing or the rapid rehousing needs of vulnerable persons.*

**KEY STEPS AND TIMELINES:**

ACTION AREAS:	Jan to June 2016	July to Dec 2016	2017	Ongoing
1. Advance amendments to business licensing by-law to include unregulated congregate living activities. Goal: Completed by summer 2016				
2. Confirm Leadership Team and “Situation Table” (Group 5 Agencies and Group 1 Participants) Formalize the Draft Protocol Goal: Completed by summer 2016, then ongoing.				
3. Develop a communication strategy and plan to continue to advance these initiatives through other existing groups and networks Goal: Fall 2016 then ongoing.				
4. Pilot assessment tools for use in both potential vulnerable occupancy and emergency social services situations. Goal: Ongoing				
5. Establish an extended Emergency Social Services plan related to supporting vulnerable persons after a reception centre event. Goal: Fall 2016				
Civic Administration Support and Oversight through Community Engagement and Service Management (Ongoing)				

**APPENDIX C:  
Vulnerable Occupancy Protocol (VOP)**



Draft

**VULNERABLE OCCUPANCY PROTOCOL (VOP)  
RESPONSE STRATEGY**

**A Community Response to Support the Safe  
Housing Conditions for Vulnerable Londoners**

**INTENT:**

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**Supporting safe and stable housing conditions for vulnerable persons.**

The Vulnerable Occupancy Protocol Response Strategy (VOP) is intended to address responses to issues of life safety of individual tenants or occupants or a group together in one residence where the physical state of the residence or the behaviours within it are putting existing vulnerable people at life risk or imminent risk of homelessness.

**GOAL:**

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Provide a **Sustainable Community-Based Response** Supporting **Safe and Stable Housing Conditions** for **Vulnerable Occupants/Persons Living Independently** in our Communities

**SCOPE:**

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This protocol establishes a working relationship and shared understanding between core service providers engaged in responses to vulnerable occupancy within the City of London. It establishes general practices related to the co-ordination of activities, communications, assessments, collaborative approaches, and debriefing plans related to potential vulnerable occupancy situations.

Situations will be assessed by existing enforcement service professionals related to potential risks. Vulnerability will be similarly assessed by social and health field work experts and responses remain within the existing authorities, roles, limitations, and services provided by separate agencies and services areas (including those within the City) and does not create new authorities, governance structures or organizations, or extend the service scope or capacities beyond those that exist.

**WORKING PRINCIPLES:**

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**For those being served...**

- Caring community
- Respectful approaches
- Engaged participants

**By those serving...**

- Integrated responses
- Appropriate and deliverable solutions
- Measurable and action oriented
- Build on what is working well

**APPROACH:**

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This protocol establishes a **co-ordinated community based approach to high risk situations of potential vulnerable occupancy that...**

- Aligns existing service agency activities, practices, and accountabilities;
- Establishes co-ordinated responses to situations based on best practices and knowledge;
- Differentiates levels and types of responses based on the needs of individuals and unique circumstances of their situations; and
- Supports a sustainable outcomes based approach to services.

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

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**(Potential) Vulnerable Occupant(s):** A person or persons identified as being at potential life risk or imminent risk of homelessness or putting others in potentially similar circumstances due to the state of their existing housing conditions or behaviours related to their housing. This excludes individuals who are experiencing homelessness and separately supported.

Vulnerability of persons may be assessed by trained practitioners or be identified through established risk assessments tools related to the co-occurrence of poverty, mental and/or physical health conditions, addictions, AND behaviours where homelessness, safety of living conditions, or other precarious housing issues are of a primary concern.

For the purposes of this protocol, vulnerable persons will not include those with primary on-site supports provided through a registered or funded government assisted or supportive or transitional housing program.

**Enforcement:** Enforcement refers primarily to City of London based Fire Prevention and By-law Enforcement, Middlesex London Health Unit related Public Health officials, or to any enforcement based supports of London Police Service.

**Urgent Enforcement** refers to the limited possibility of situations where legislated or authorized mandates must be exercised to remove people from unsafe housing conditions. This is a rare occurrence but may require rapid response. **Priority Situation** refers to non-urgent actions include those where remedies, fines, orders, or direct actions may occur to support the safety of a dwelling where urgent action may not be required.

**Unsafe Housing:** Risks to safe and stable housing extend beyond those identified through applicable by-laws or building safety rules. Within the context of this protocol, unsafe housing relates to the circumstances of a tenant or other occupant of a dwelling where either the physical space/structure or the behaviours and activities within it are deemed to put occupants at heightened life risk or risk of imminent homelessness.

**VOP Excluded Circumstances:** VOP processes generally shall exclude congregate living in facilities or locations monitored and delivered through regulated government sponsored or funded programs for supportive housing, or supported or transitional housing.

**Core Team:** An initial group of agencies and service providers will coordinate responses through a Core Team for initial responses to VOP situations:

Enforcement Based Organizations:

- City of London By-law Enforcement Officers,  
Fire Prevention Officers,
- Middlesex London Health Unit, Public Health Officers,

Community Support Agencies:

- City of London Social Services,  
Homeless Prevention.
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Middlesex,
- Mission Services London

With support and assistance of London Police Services.

## VOP RESPONSE:

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**Issue Identification through General Public:**

Issues of potential vulnerable occupancy may be shared through contacts by members of the public or persons providing services within the community with knowledge or concern for life safety of occupants of a specific dwelling place.

These contacts can be directed to City By-law Enforcement (519-661-4660) or Fire Prevention Services (519-661-4565) or to [enforcement@london.ca](mailto:enforcement@london.ca). (Any calls of imminent life safety concern should be directed to 911).

**Enforcement Agency Issue Identification:**

Agency enforcement identifying a location where safety risks appear to impact vulnerable occupants may, subject to the assessment of situation, initiate a group email communication to

the Core Team. This email communication will serve to define the potential situation and initiate the coordination of response.

**Support Agency Issue Identification:**

Support providers participating in the Core Team may identify situations where the behaviours of those involved or the physical condition of their dwelling requires escalation due to potential impacts to life safety. Enforcement may provide support to reviewing criteria or provider may go directly to the Core Team using the group email.

**VOP Email Blast:**

A City of London sponsored email address will act as the primary mechanism to share generic information related to a potential vulnerable occupancy location across Core Team group members. No user shall share information beyond that allowed to them by their existing rules and authority. Core information shall relate to a specific location and provide general details about the nature of the housing and/or the concerns impacting safety in such a way as to maintain their respective agency's criteria related to confidentiality and access to information.

**Co-ordinated Response Approach:**

The co-ordinated response approach recognizes that incidents may be identified at any time; however, in almost all situations, efforts are made to ensure sufficient time to co-ordinate responses and strategies. Although responses may not require immediate action, all efforts will be made to rapidly respond any email communication to assess resource capacities and identify lead staff.

Engaged agency and service providers act within their service portfolios and may leverage their contacts, networks, and partnerships to support connections with other service agencies and support providers as needed.

**Core Team Situation Table:**

The Core Team Situation Table will be assembled at minimum quarterly to:

1. Debrief on occurrences of potential vulnerable occupancies identifying learnings and any potential gaps in services or response plans;
2. Determine any necessary training or communication needs associated with vulnerable occupancy responses within the team, or with broader service partners; and
3. Document and track situations that have occurred.

These meetings may also occur as required following or during a VOP response.

**Leadership Table:**

The Leadership Table will be convened at least twice per year to determine needs associated with either vulnerable occupancy community based plans, strategies, or resource requirements. The table will consist of lead staff of the organizations involved in the Core Team with a primary function of supporting their work within this protocol including the advancement of shared tools, training, and other strategies within this protocol.

Leadership team members will hold responsibilities for community based communications, linkages with other networks and sector bodies with direct or indirect involvement in responses to vulnerable occupancies.

The Leadership Table will be facilitated and co-chaired through the Managing Director, Housing, Social Services, and Dearness Home and Chief By-law Enforcement Officer.

**TOOLS:**

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|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Email blast process and template | (not included in public version) |
| 2. Email group contacts             | (not included in public version) |
| 3. Flowchart of process             | (not included in public version) |