## City of London Ontario Works Participant & Service Delivery Profile

City of London Social Services delivers the Ontario Works program through a decentralized service delivery model. Five main offices and one satellite office are situated across the city providing community based access to services and supports. All locations offer desk side service for individuals and families, along with a range of supports in collaboration with external partners depending on location and community specific needs. The map below, illustrates the Geographic Service Areas (GSAs) for each Social Services office, as well as the associated percentage of total caseload. It is evident in Figure 1 below, that Geographic Service Areas vary considerably in size, however percentage of total Ontario Works caseload remains relatively proportional to size of office locations, which determines parameters for staffing allocations and partnership opportunities. The following factors and considerations were part of the site selection process and continue to assist in determining the Geographic Service Areas that are reflected below:

• Population density of catchment area	• Proximity to where clients live
• Service delivery for rural areas within City of London boundaries	• Proximity to related and existing community resources and services
• Access to public transit	• Opportunity to co-locate with other agencies or municipal services

Figure 1
Ontario Works Caseload Distribution by Geographic Service Area [1]
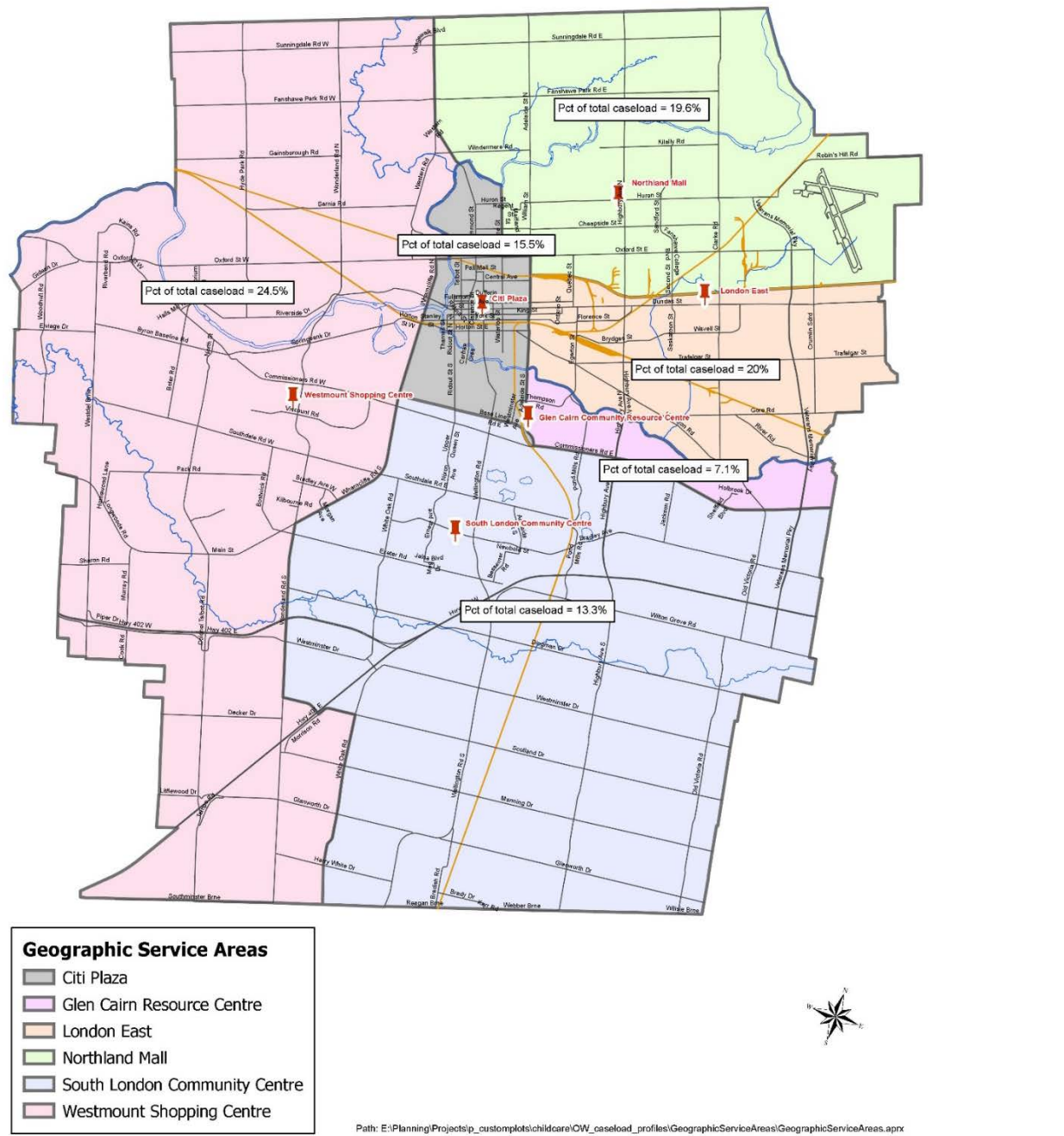
Clients are able to access Ontario Works supports through multiple channels at all Social Services locations across the City of London. Intake screening is completed via phone, an online Provincial portal or in person (as required). All main office locations are resourced with Customer Service Representatives who facilitate first point of contact for Ontario Works services. New to 2019 will be the introduction of the My Benefits App, an online application and data sharing case management tool for OW clients.

Over the course of 2018, 7097 intake appointments were conducted in order to complete Ontario Works applications. The intake appointment types vary and are offered across all locations. For any type of appointment, interpreter services may be required to best support clients in completing an application or updating file information. Table 1 below illustrates the top five languages requiring interpreter services from 2014-2018. Additionally in 2018, a bilingual Caseworker position was added in order to offer case management supports in French for clients who require that service.

Table 1
Top Five Languages Requiring Interpreter Services[2]

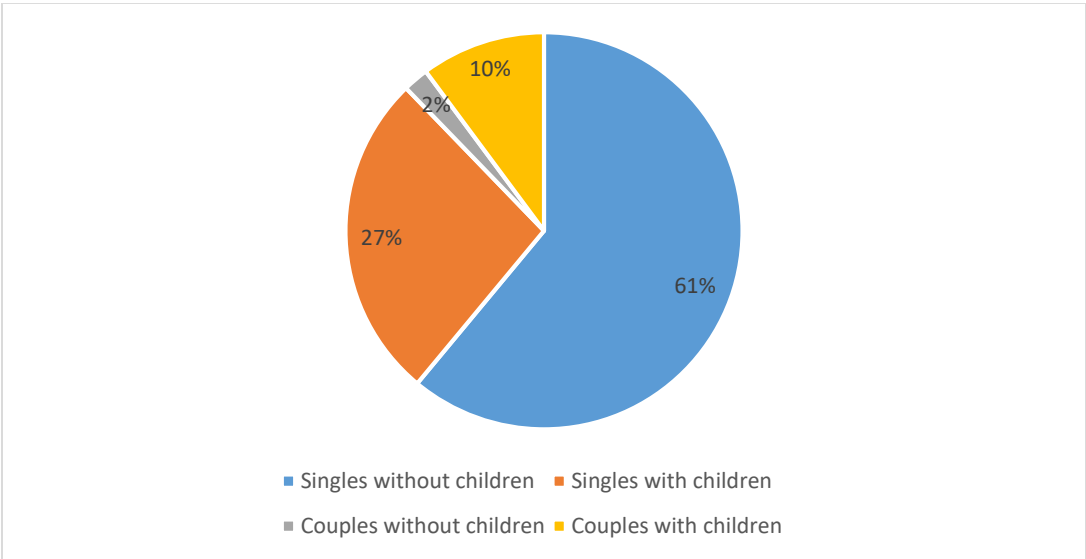| 2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic
Spanish	Spanish	Nepal	Spanish	Spanish
Nepal	Nepal	Spanish	Nepal	Nepal
Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	French	Kurdish
French	Persian	Persian	Assyrian	Assyrian

Caseload

The City of London Ontario Works year over year average caseload size has not changed significantly from 2014 -2018 as seen in Table 2.

Table 2
Caseload Comparison (monthly averages)[3]

2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
11,077	11,528	11,885	11,952	11,699

Looking specifically at the 2018 Caseload for City of London Social Services, Figure 2 below provides an overall summary of benefit unit types when combining all locations. The 2018 caseload composition continues to reflect a greater proportion of singles on the caseload.

Figure 2
Overall Caseload Composition[4]

- ■ Singles without children ■ Singles with children
- ■ Couples without children ■ Couples with children

Looking more specifically at the caseload composition, Table 3 below provides an overview of benefit unit type as percentages by location in order to illustrate case composition within each

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[2] City of London Social Services Client Management System 2014-2018
[3] City of London Finance & Business Support 2018
[4] Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services (MCCSS) Performance Report December 2018

GSA. Understanding case composition is an important service delivery consideration as it may impact team structure and areas of focus, resource allocation and what community partnerships are established to best support clients.
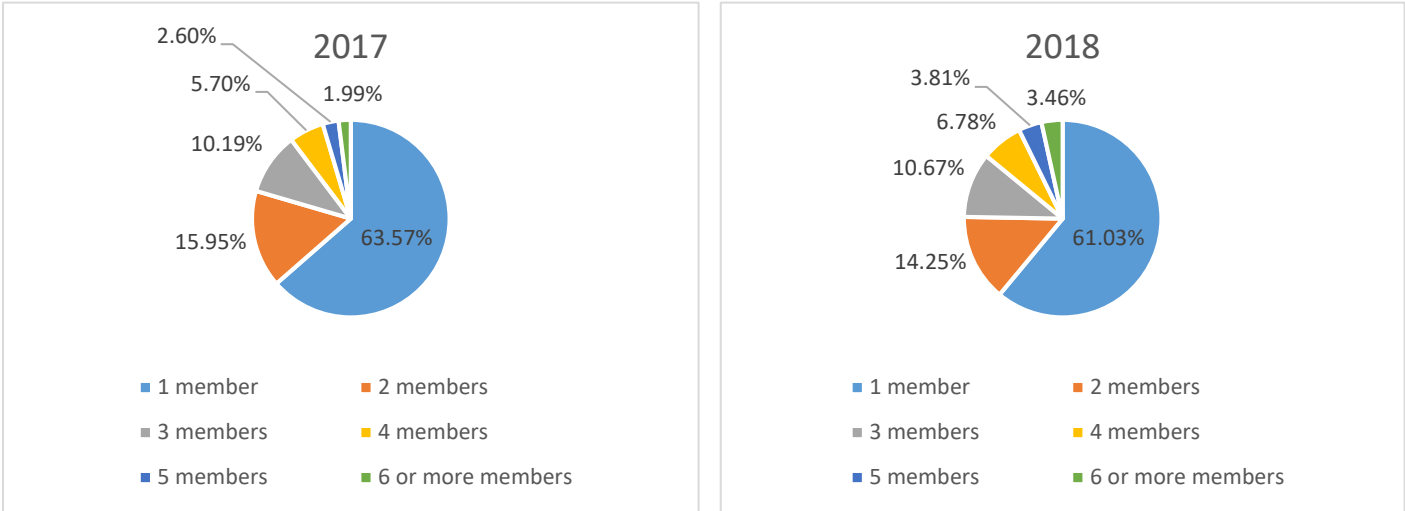
Table 3[5]
Caseload Composition Percentages by Location

Core	Office Percentage	Northland Mall	Office Percentage
Couple	1%	Couple	2%
Couple with Dependents	3%	Couple with Dependents	12%
Single	81%	Single	58%
Sole Support	15%	Sole Support	28%
London East *		**South London Community Centre**	
Couple	2%	Couple	2%
Couple with Dependents	5%	Couple with Dependents	16%
Single	64%	Single	50%
Sole Support	29%	Sole Support	32%
Westmount Shopping Centre			
Couple	3%	*Glen Cairn Resource Centre location is included in London East benefit unit type data as it is a satellite location for the London East office	
Couple with Dependents	18%		
Single	56%		
Sole Support	23%		

Variation in benefit unit composition and size (Figure 3) across all Social Services locations supports the need for a community based service delivery approach in order to tailor supports and services as required at each location. Looking at benefit unit size in particular, the following considerations are important to note:

- The number of benefit units with children of any kind in 2017 represented 34.03% of the OW caseload. This has only slightly increased to 36.9% in 2018.

- Family benefit units of 5 or more people have increased from 4.59% of the caseload in 2017 to 7.27% in 2018.

- The percentage growth of benefit units of 4 or more (3.8%) has outpaced the percentage increase in family cases in general (2.9%), meaning while the London caseload has gained some new families, the family sizes are becoming larger.

Figure 3
Benefit Unit Size by Caseload Percentage Summary[6]

Time on Assistance

The Provincial vision for the Ontario Works program is "to achieve improved employment outcomes for Ontario Works participants by increasing individual employability with the goal of sustainable employment and increased financial independence[7]." Delivery partners are expected to base programming and supports on Provincial priorities and develop service delivery models that address local need and context. Part of understanding the local context is understanding what barriers to employment exist in order to develop appropriate strategies and approaches that factor in labour market trends as well as the community supports that are available. For many clients, significant barriers exist along the employment continuum and may, impact the ability to acquire skills and training, successfully gain employment or sustain and maintain employment. Length of time on assistance is one of many indicators utilized to determine how best to support clients facing multiple and complex barriers to employment. Figure 4 below provides a summary of time on assistance by percentage of the yearly average caseload from 2014-2018. Also provided in Table 3, is a summary of the average time on assistance by years from 2014-2018, which illustrates the overall impacts of caseload percentage that are on assistance for more than 12 and 24 months.

Figure 4
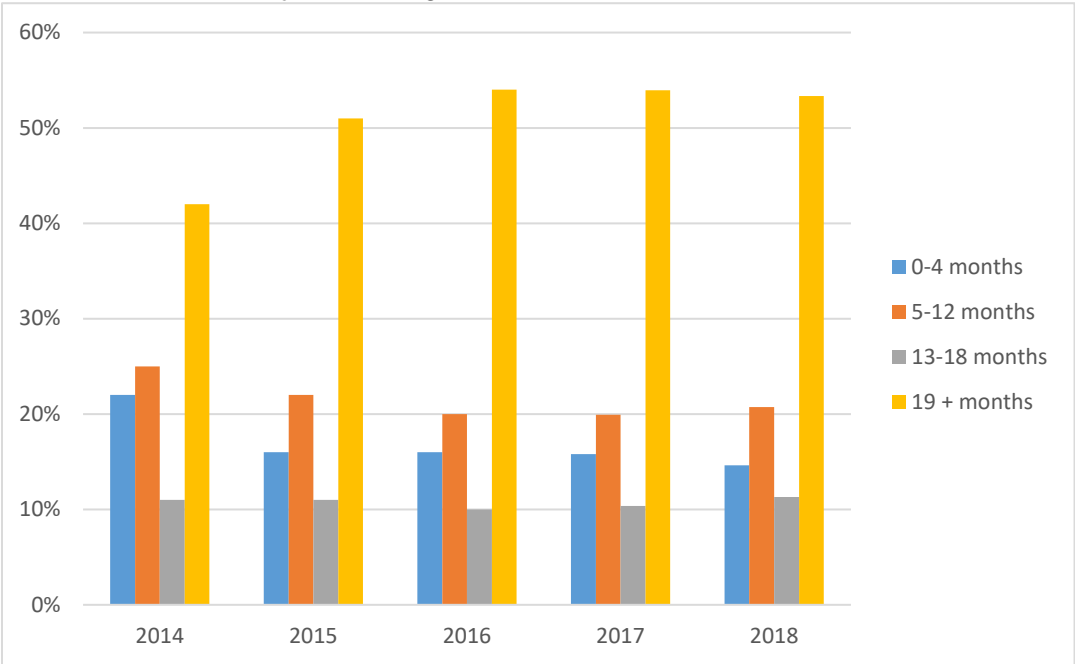*Time on Assistance by Precentage of Caseload[8]*

Table 4
Length of Time Assistance[9]

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
More than 12 months (% of caseload)	53%	62%	64%	64%	64%
More than 24 months (% of caseload)	34%	43%	45%	45%	45%
Average time on Assistance (years)	2.0 yrs	2.6 yrs	2.88 yrs	2.88 yrs	3.02 yrs

As evident in Figure 4 above, a number of clients have been on assistance for greater than 19 months with little fluctuation since 2015. Notably, between 2014 to 2015, clients on assistance for 19 months and over increased by 9%. Overall between 2014-2018, average time on assistance (Table 4) has increased by 1 full year.

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[7] MCCSS 2018 Service Plan
[8] MCCSS Caseload at a Glance Report 2014-2018
[9] MCCSS Caseload at a Glance Report 2014-2018

In 2018, the Intensive Case Management (ICM) Team worked with an average of 425 caseloads to support and assist participants to remove the obstacles effecting life stabilization. The focus of the ICM team in 2018 was to initiate a response to length of time on assistance beginning with clients who have remained on assistance for a significant amount of time (4 continuous years or greater). Much of the support provided by the ICM team worked to address factors contributing to time on assistance utilizing the following strategies:

- Wrap around supports for clients who have been medically deferred including assistance in moving toward ODSP supports.
- Intensive supports for clients who have been on assistance longer than 4 continuous years and struggle with motivation, self-efficacy and personal challenges including mental health and wellness.

Employment Supports & Outcomes

During 2018, City of London Social Services worked in partnership with over 20 community agencies who specifically provide Ontario Works clients with employment and training services. Of the 20 agencies, 12 have contractual agreements with the City of London to provide specific employment and related supports (Purchase of Service-POS) providers. Throughout 2018, 11,174 referrals were made to POS providers, a slight increase of 1.2% over the previous year. The 11,174 referrals that were made, were made to services that include but are not limited to the following:

- Referrals to employment placement supports, including clients who were looking for self-employment supports.
- Referrals to specific skills training and development programs thereby increasing employability through updated skills, abilities and certifications that directly relate to local labour market needs.

Education and literacy are critical elements for gaining entry to the workforce as well as maintaining sustainable employment. Table 5 below, outlines level of education comparisons as a percentage of all adults on the City of London Ontario Works caseload. Although most indicators have stayed consistent since 2014, Grade 12-13 level completion increased by 4%, which accounts for the decrease in grade 9-11 level of education over the same time period.

Table 5
Education Level by Percentage of All Adults on Caseload[10]

Level of Education	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Grade 1-8	6 %	6 %	6 %	7 %	7 %
Grade 9-11	39 %	38 %	37 %	35 %	34 %
Grade 12-13	31 %	32 %	34 %	34 %	35 %
Post-Secondary	24 %	24 %	23 %	24 %	24 %

As illustrated in Table 5 above, a large percentage (41%) of Ontario Works participants in the City of London hold less than a Grade 12 education. In an effort to address the gap in grade 12 education percentages, a number of approaches have been taken. Over the course of 2018, 806 referrals were made to education (Literacy, GED and high school credit) programs. Additionally, in order to support young parents (age 18-25) who have not yet completed Grade 12 education, 81 referrals to the Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) program were made. As indicated previously in Figure 2 regarding caseload composition, there are a significant number of families with a single parent household (26.6%). The LEAP program helps clients develop an action plan for success tailored to individual needs and goals with a focus of enhancing parenting, employability and life skills. In 2018, 177 participants were enrolled in the LEAP program and 31 participants graduated with a Grade 12 or equivalency. Finally, as there are many options to complete high school degree or equivalency, 154 Referrals were made to Literacy Link South Central to assist participants in navigating an educational path that aligned with personalized employment and career goals.

[10] MCCSS Caseload at a Glance Report 2014-2018

<u>Bridges Out of Poverty / Circles</u>

London's Bridges Out of Poverty/Circles initiative is a key contributor to the City of London's response to poverty. The initiative achieved significant successes in 2018. Foundational to the Circles initiative is the importance of relationships and sense of community accountability. As such, 72 individuals and families living in poverty have formed natural connections with one another and with 81 Allies as well as Coaches who, have provided encouragement, support, and guidance through the program. Participants (Leaders) with support from Allies, have been able to achieve a variety of successes, which include but are not limited to:

- Participants are finding work, and returning to college to pursue careers
- Leaders who are early in their Circles journey are rediscovering that they deserve happiness, getting motivated, and planning the steps needed to accomplish their goals
- Children are enjoying a weekly meal routine with their Circles family
- Young people are celebrating high school graduation

Figure 5 below provides a summary of participant outcomes through the Circles initiative. Most notably, 47.6% of participants have gained sustainable employment as well as 14.3% employed and receiving Ontario Works top up to assist with supporting long term financial stability and the goal of exiting Ontario Works.

Figure 5
2018 Circles Initiative Participant Outcomes[11]
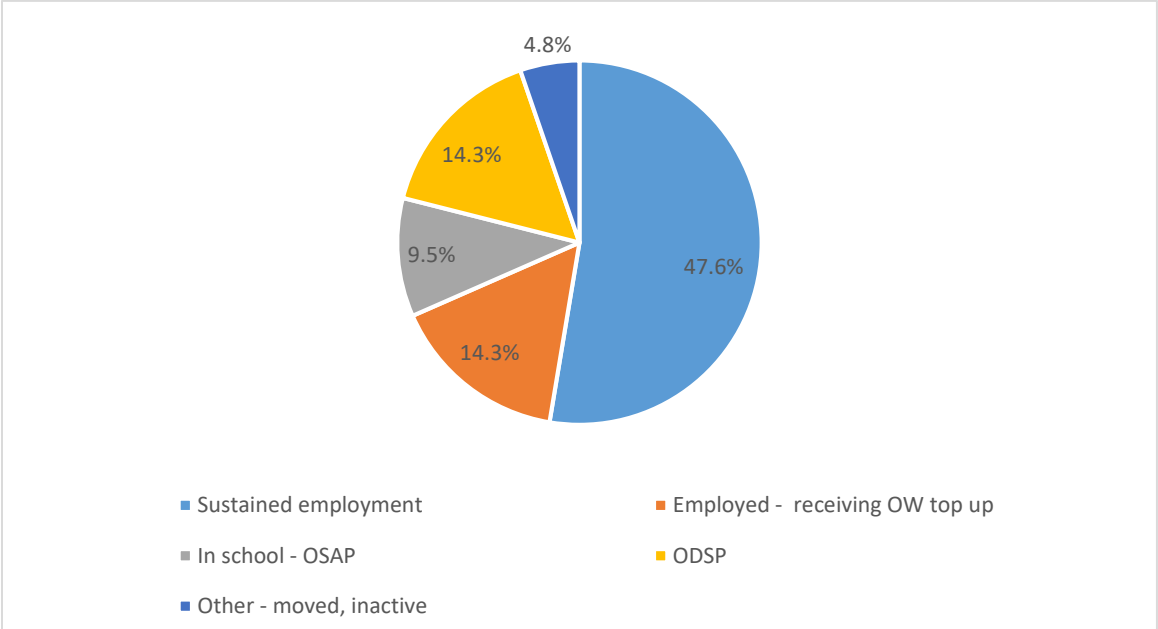
Conclusion

Service delivery design and resourcing decisions are informed in part by the data collected and analyzed through several information sources including reports generated in the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS). Along with data, local context and community needs are continually reviewed to ensure service delivery planning, design and implementation best support the City of London's most vulnerable as well as effectively equip frontline staff delivering the services. Working within a community based service delivery model also affords the opportunity to notice unique trends across the city such as caseload composition and benefit unit size as well as the ability to connect with local community partners and work collaboratively to provide supports and services. Careful planning and strategic partnerships help ensure the City of London Social Services remains responsive to the client demographic trends and local opportunities for success.

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[11] City of London Circles Evaluation 2018