



April 2019

Community Conversation Toolkit

**London's Homeless Prevention and Housing
5-Year Plan**

SECTION 1:

Introduction and Overview

About London's Homeless Prevention and Housing 5-Year Plan

London's Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan is being updated in 2019. The purpose of the planning process is to create a community plan that will guide the work of homeless prevention and housing over the next five years.

The Plan will help London move towards the goal of housing stability for individuals and families.

Why is the Plan being created?

The creation of the Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan is:

- An opportunity for London to identify local needs to be addressed through homeless prevention and housing services.
- Intended to satisfy the planning requirements of Municipal Council, the Province of Ontario, and the Government of Canada, and will align with existing city, regional, provincial, and national strategies.

Who is leading this in London?

- The City of London's Homeless Prevention and Housing service divisions (both with the Housing, Social Services and Deerness Home (HSSDH) service area) will jointly lead this work.
- The scope of work includes Homeless Prevention in London and Housing Services for both the City of London and Middlesex County.
- Homeless Prevention and Housing Services will support Middlesex County to develop their own Plan regarding homeless prevention strategies and actions.

How will the Plan be prepared?

- 1. Engaging the Community** – Community members and stakeholders will share their ideas through community conversations and an online survey (Spring 2019).
- 2. Testing the Plan** – Community members and stakeholders, including the London Housing Advisory Committee and the London Homeless Coalition, will provide feedback on draft strategies through public consultations. The London Homeless Coalition will recommend the approval of the Homeless Prevention Plan (Spring 2019).
- 3. Approving the Plan** – Municipal Council of the City of London will approve the Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan (Fall 2019).

SECTION 2:

Facilitation Guide For Community Conversations

About This Toolkit

The Public is invited to share their ideas about strategies and actions for the Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan.

Feedback will be collected online through a survey and in person through community conversations.

This Toolkit has been prepared to support hosting a community conversation. All feedback will be compiled and used to create draft strategies and actions for the Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan.

Materials Required To Facilitate A Community Conversation

- Facilitation Guide (Section 2 of this Toolkit)
- Community Conversation Workbook (Section 3 of this Toolkit)

Instructions For Facilitating A Community Conversation

The instructions below will assist you to facilitate a community conversation.

1. Welcome all participants and thank them for being part of the community conversation.
2. Review the “About London’s Homeless Prevention and Housing 5-Year Review and Plan” on page 2 of this Toolkit. This will help make sure that everyone participating has the same general understanding.
3. There are 11 themes for discussion and feedback. Please see page 5 of this Toolkit for a list of the themes. Please review the themes with your group. Together, decide which themes will be discussed during the community conversation.
4. Begin with one theme. Read or ask participants to read the “Did you know?” section in the Community Conversation Workbook for the chosen theme and the statistics related to London and/or Canada.
5. Ask the group the theme-specific questions. Please write their responses to each question in the space provided. You can type your notes in the electronic version of the Community Conversation Workbook.

Instructions For Sharing Feedback From The Community Conversation

1. Please send the results of your community conversation by Sunday, June 30, 2019.
2. If using an electronic copy of this workbook, please email results to HPHLondon@london.ca when the workbook is complete.
3. If using a paper copy of this workbook, please scan the document and email it to HPHLondon@london.ca. You can also drop off the workbook at one of these five locations:

Citi Plaza City of London – Main Reception 355 Wellington Street Suite 248 London, ON N6A 3N7	Social Services – London East 1835 Dundas Street Unit #1 London, ON N5W 3E7
Social Services – Northland Mall 1275 Highbury Avenue North London, ON N5Y 1A8	Social Services – South London Community Centre 1119 Jalna Boulevard London, ON N6E 3B3
Social Services – Westmount Shopping Centre 785 Wonderland Road South London, ON N6K 1M6	

Community Conversation Themes

1. Emergency Shelters
2. Housing First
3. Coordinated Informed Response
4. By-Name List and Coordinated Intake
5. Women Experiencing Homelessness
6. Youth Experiencing Homelessness
7. Indigenous People Experiencing Homelessness
8. Veterans Experiencing Homelessness
9. London's Community Housing System
10. Developing and Managing Community and Affordable Housing
11. London's Community Waitlist and Priority System

Thank you for facilitating a community conversation. Should you have any questions about this Toolkit please email HPHLondon@london.ca.

SECTION 3:

Community Conversation Workbook

Summary Information

Please complete the following information about the community conversation. Thank you!

Name of Community Conversation Facilitator:

Email of Community Conversation Facilitator:

Date of the Community Conversation:

Name of the Organization, Association, or Group that Hosted the Community Conversation:

Number of Participants Involved in the Community Conversation:

THEME 1:

Emergency Shelters

Did you know?

- Emergency shelters provide short-term emergency accommodation and basic needs for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- In London there are:
 - 3 adult emergency shelters;
 - 3 Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters; and,
 - 1 family emergency shelter.
- An emergency shelter for youth will open in London in 2020.
- Individuals residing in emergency shelters are experiencing absolute homelessness.
- Emergency shelters focus on diversion and rapid rehousing from shelter.
- Reducing the number of individuals who are long-term emergency shelter users increases the availability of emergency shelter beds for those entering homelessness.

In London...

- 320 emergency shelter beds are available each night in adult and family emergency shelters.
- 75 emergency shelter beds are available each night in VAW shelters.
- 43% of individuals accessing adult and family emergency shelters in 2017 stayed for 31 days or more.¹
- 739 fewer individuals accessed adult and family emergency shelter in 2017 compared to 2011, representing a 26% decrease.²
- \$1,500 is the average monthly cost for an individual to stay in emergency shelter, not including the VAW shelters.
- \$6.2 million is the cost to operate the 320 emergency shelter beds each year. This does not include VAW shelters.

Definitions

- **Absolute homelessness:** Individuals and families experiencing absolute homelessness have no physical shelter of their own.
- **Diversion:** Individuals and families are supported to find immediate housing arrangements before entering emergency shelter.
- **Rapid rehousing:** Individuals and families are helped to secure housing as quickly as possible once they have entered emergency shelter.

Questions

1. What is going well with emergency shelters in London?

2. What are your ideas for emergency shelters in the next five years?

3. What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

THEME 2:

Housing First

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Housing First programs assist individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness to secure and maintain housing by providing intensive and ongoing support.

Did you know?

- Housing First programs provide intensive in-home support for individuals experiencing chronic and persistent homelessness.
- Individuals on London's By-Name List have completed an assessment and have been prioritized to participate in a Housing First program.
- Most individuals and families experiencing homelessness do not require the intensive in-home supports provided by Housing First programs.
- Rehousing is expected to occur as individuals transition from homelessness to housing stability.

In London...

- 6 Housing First programs assist individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness to secure and maintain housing.
- 500 individuals are on London's By-Name List.
- 400 participants are supported each year through a Housing First response.
- 1:10 is a typical Housing First caseload size (1 Housing Stability Worker, 10 participants).

Definitions

- **Chronic Homelessness:** Chronic homelessness is defined as a period of homelessness lasting six months or more in the past year.³
- **Housing First:** Housing First means access to permanent housing with supports.
- **Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT):** VI-SPDAT is an assessment tool used to determine acuity and prioritization when providing assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness.⁴
- **The By-Name List:** A list of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and high use of emergency shelter.

Questions

1. What is going well with Housing First in London?

2. What are your ideas for Housing First in the next five years?

3. What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

THEME 3:

Coordinated Informed Response

Did you know?

- There is an increase of individuals who are street involved and demonstrating unpredictable, disruptive behaviour in London.
- The change is a result of the:
 - type of drugs and substances being used;
 - increased risks from substance use, untreated mental illness, and homelessness;
 - pressures on the supports and treatment options; and,
 - housing available.
- London has implemented a Coordinated Informed Response. The Coordinated Informed Response is:
 - a caring and compassionate response;
 - aimed at supporting individuals who are street-involved, sleeping rough, and urban camping in finding safe alternative solutions focused on housing; and,
 - a collaborative response that includes City of London services and London Cares.
- London Cares outreach is available 24/7 to respond to individuals experiencing homelessness who are street-involved.

In London...

During the 12 week Coordinated Informed Response pilot:

- 196 instances of sleeping rough were addressed.
- 94 urban camps were removed.
- 93 individuals were provided with housing search support.
- 94% of individuals reported living with an addiction.
- 92% of individuals reported living with a mental health issue.

Definitions

- **Urban Camping:** Urban camping is when an individual is sleeping in a makeshift, temporary physical structure set up in an urban environment or park.
- **Sleeping Rough:** Sleeping rough is when an individual is sleeping in the open without a physical structure, such as a park bench or stairwell.

Questions

1. What is going well with the Coordinated Informed Response in London?

2. What are your ideas to support a coordinated and informed response in the next five years?

3. What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

THEME 4:

By-Name List and Coordinated Intake

Did you know?

- More time and resources are required to assist individuals to achieve housing stability the longer they have experienced homelessness.
- Individuals on London's By-Name List have completed a VI-SPDAT assessment and have been prioritized for service.
- As a result, those with the greatest needs are matched with London's most intensive resources.
- London's By-Name List and Coordinated Intake is a collaborative effort of London's homeless serving organizations.

In London...

- 13 homeless serving organizations are working together through a shared Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- 500 individuals are on London's By-Name List.
- 43% of individuals accessing emergency shelter in 2017 stayed for 31 days or more.
- \$6.2 million is the cost to operate the 320 emergency shelter beds each year. This does not include Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters.
- \$1,500 is the average monthly cost for an individual to stay in emergency shelter, not including the VAW shelters.

Definitions

- **Coordinated Intake:** Coordinated Intake is a single point of entry for services and supports.
- **Chronic Homelessness:** Chronic homelessness is defined as a period of homelessness lasting six months or more in the past year.⁵
- **Homeless Information Management System (HMIS):** A Homeless Information Management System is a database used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness.⁶
- **Housing First:** Housing First means access to permanent housing with supports.
- **Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT):** VI-SPDAT is an assessment tool used to determine acuity and prioritization when providing assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness.⁷
- **The By-Name List:** A list of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and high use of emergency shelter.

Questions

1. What is going well with the By-Name List and Coordinated Intake in London?

2. What are your ideas to support the By-Name List and Coordinated Intake in the next five years?

3. What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

THEME 5:

Women Experiencing Homelessness

Did you know?

- Domestic violence is a major cause of homelessness amongst women.⁸
- Women are at an increased risk of experiencing hidden homelessness.⁹
- Women experiencing homelessness are at an increased risk of violence, assault, sexual exploitation, and abuse.¹⁰
- London's Community Plan Regarding Street Level Women at Risk focuses on addressing the housing, exit strategies, health, and well-being of women who are engaged in street-involved sex work.¹¹

In London...

- 20% of London's adult emergency shelter residents are females.¹²
- 335 women accessed Violence Against Women (VAW) shelter beds at Anova.¹³
- 50 street-involved sex workers secured housing and achieved housing stability through a dedicated Housing First program.¹⁴

In Canada...

- 27% of the homeless population are women.¹⁵

Definitions

- **Hidden Homelessness:** Hidden homelessness is when individuals stay with relatives, friends, neighbours, or strangers because they do not have their own permanent housing.¹⁶

Questions

1. What is going well with assisting women experiencing homelessness in London?

2. What are your ideas for assisting women experiencing homelessness in London in the next five years?

3. What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

THEME 6:

Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Did you know?

- Between 60% and 70% of youth who experience homelessness report leaving family environments where they have experienced violence, including physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse.¹⁷
- Youth experiencing homelessness are nearly six times more likely to be victimized in comparison to the general public.¹⁸
- Homeless female youth are amongst the most vulnerable to be sex trafficked.¹⁹
- Youth who identify as LGBTQ2S are at greater risk of experiencing homelessness due to homophobia and transphobia.²⁰
- Youth Opportunities Unlimited is building a dedicated emergency shelter for youth in London that will be opening in 2020.

In London...

- 12% of individuals accessing London's adult emergency shelters were between the ages of 18 – 24. This does not include youth who may have accessed family emergency shelter or Violence Against Women (VAW) shelter beds.²¹
- 10% of the 477 individuals on the waitlist for community housing in 2018 were youth under the age of 25.
- 70 individuals under the age of 25 were housed in community housing in 2018. The average wait time to secure housing was 235 days.

In Canada...

- 6,000 Canadian youth are experiencing homelessness on any given night in Canada.²²
- 20% of the homeless population are young people between the ages of 16 – 24.²³
- 40% of youth experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ2S.²⁴

Definitions

- **Community (Social) Housing:** Community housing is rent-geared-to-income housing where the rent is based directly on the tenant's income.
- **Youth:** Youth refers to young people between the ages of 13 and 24.
- **Youth Homelessness:** Youth homelessness refers to young people living independently of parents and/or caregivers who do not have a stable, safe, or consistent residence.²⁵
- **LGBTQ2S:** An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit.

Questions

1. What is going well with assisting youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability in London?

2. What are your ideas for assisting youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability in London in the next five years?

3. What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

THEME 7:

Indigenous People Experiencing Homelessness

Did you know?

- Urban Indigenous Peoples are eight times more likely to experience homelessness than non-Indigenous people.²⁶
- A Local Indigenous Homeless Prevention Plan (Giwetashkad) is being developed.

In London...

- 29% of individuals and families surveyed as part of London's 2018 Enumeration Event identified as Indigenous or having Indigenous ancestry.²⁷
- 3% of the population in London reported as having an 'Indigenous Identity' according to 2016 Census data.²⁸

In Canada...

- 28% to 34% of shelter users report Indigenous ancestry, whereas Indigenous Peoples represent approximately 4.3% of the Canadian population.²⁹
- 40% of Indigenous children live in poverty compared to the national average of 19% of children who live in poverty.³⁰

Questions

1. What is going well with assisting Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness in London?

2. What are your ideas for assisting Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness in London in the next five years?

3. What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

THEME 8:

Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

Did you know?

- Homeless Veterans have unique needs amongst the general homeless population, including physical and mental health consequences following release from active military service.³¹
- London offers a coordinated Housing First response for Veterans experiencing homelessness.

In Canada...

- 2,950 Veterans use homeless shelters each year in Canada.³²
- 2.2% of shelter users reported having served in the military.³³
- 78 Canadian Veterans participated in the development of the Canadian Model for Housing and Support of Veterans Experiencing Homelessness. The average length of time the 78 participating Canadian Veterans experienced homelessness was 5.8 years.³⁴

Definitions

- **Veteran:** A Veteran is an individual who is a former or current member of the Canadian Forces.³⁵

Questions

1. What is going well with assisting Veterans experiencing homelessness in London?

2. What are your ideas for assisting Veterans experiencing homelessness in London in the next five years?

3. What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

THEME 9:

London's Community Housing System

Did you know?

- The City of London is responsible for managing the delivery of community and affordable housing.
- The term “social housing” has been changed to “community housing”.
- The City of London works with 83 non-profit corporations, non-profit housing cooperatives, and private market housing providers to offer 4,700 housing units to support community housing needs.
- The London Middlesex Housing Corporation manages an additional 3,300 housing units across 32 properties for more than 5,000 people.
- The City of London is required to first offer housing to those with Special Priority Program status.
- The Government of Ontario provides an overview of Affordable and Social (Community) Housing on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing webpage.
- The Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) provides London-specific housing and rental market data, which is publicly available. This data is located within the Housing Market Information Portal on CMHC's website.

In London...

- 8,000 community housing units are supported by the City of London across 118 buildings managed by 84 housing providers.
- 477 individuals were housed in a community housing unit in 2018. Of those housed, 89% had priority status.
- \$36 million in funding from federal, provincial, and municipal sources was administered by the City in 2018 towards housing programs.
- 39 community housing units per 1,000 households exist in London. This is behind the provincial average of 42 community housing units per 1,000 households. This is the result of the population steadily increasing while the stock of community housing units remains constant.

Definitions

- **Community (Social) Housing:** Community housing is rent-geared-to-income housing where the rent is based directly on the tenant's income.
- **London Middlesex Housing Corporation (LMHC):** LMHC is an independent corporate entity, with the City of London as the sole shareholder.
- **Special Priority Program:** Individuals with Special Priority Program status are individuals escaping a situation of domestic abuse and/or human trafficking.
- **Public Housing:** Public housing is part of the Community (Social) Housing program and was transferred from the federal government to the province, and from the province to local governments by means of the Service Manager as sole shareholder. In London, this is referred to London Middlesex Housing Corporation.

Questions

1. What is going well within the London community housing system?

2. What are your ideas for improving the London community housing system within the next five years?

3. What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

4. What does affordability in London mean to you?

THEME 10:

Developing and Managing Community and Affordable Housing

Did you know?

- A housing unit is considered affordable if no more than 30% of an individual's gross income is allocated to housing costs.
- In 2016, 14% of all households in London were identified as being in core housing need, with some families spending over 50% of their income on housing.
- Compared to other large cities in Canada, London is in the top ten nationally and is the fifth highest in Ontario for core housing need.
- The City of London is reviewing all planning tools to support an increase in affordable housing stock.
- A Council report entitled *Affordable Housing – Planning Tools to Support the Development of Affordable Housing* was submitted in October 2018, which provides an overview of these planning tools.
- As part of the Council policies, the City of London has established a Surplus School Site Evaluation and Acquisition Policy to advance affordable housing projects on land identified by School Boards as surplus.

In London...

- The supply of new rental housing units constructed in London was 566 units in 2018, 1,227 units in 2017, and 1,167 units in 2016.
- 77% of all new construction development in London was condos and detached homes in 2017.
- \$3.9 million was invested by the City of London in 2018 to secure 95 affordable housing units for a period of 50 years starting from the date of occupancy.
- 2.1% was the vacancy rate in London-Middlesex for available rental units in 2018.

Definitions

- **Core Housing Need:** Core housing need means the dwelling type did not suit a family's needs or was unaffordable.
- **Affordable Housing:** Affordable housing means safe, secure, and suitable housing that meets individuals' needs and ability to pay. Housing is considered to be affordable when a household spends 30% or less of its pre-tax income on adequate shelter.³⁶

Questions

1. What is going well with developing London's community and affordable housing?

2. What are your ideas for improving London's community and affordable housing within the next five years?

3. What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

4. What does affordability in London mean to you?

THEME 11:

London's Community Housing Waitlist and Priority System

Did you know?

- Community housing provides individuals and families with permanent and long-term housing stability.
- The City of London is required by provincial legislation to maintain a waitlist for individuals and families who are seeking access to community housing.
- The City of London has a Council-endorsed local priority housing system that includes local status for individuals identified as urgent homeless, urgent social, and urgent medical.
- For more information regarding urgent status definitions, please visit the, Applying for Social Housing, page within the City of London's webpage.
- The London Rent-Geared-To-Income housing waitlist has grown over the last two years primarily due to multiple economic and social factors, resulting in an increased demand on social housing. These factors are made worse by the lack of growth within the community housing stock and low vacancies within community housing buildings.
- The term "social housing" has been changed to "community housing".
- The City of London assesses each individual on the community housing waitlist annually to revisit housing needs.

In London...

- 4,780 individuals are currently on the waitlist for community housing as of 2018.
- 18% of individuals on the waitlist for community housing in 2018 were housed.
- The average wait time for individuals and families to be housed after they become eligible for community housing was:
 - 6 months: Special Priority Program as identified by the Province of Ontario
 - 1 – 2 years: Local Urgent Status as defined by City Council (homelessness, social, medical)
 - 2 – 5 years: High Need (based on legislatively defined low income thresholds)
 - 4 – 8 years: Chronological based on date of application

Note: These wait times are continuing to increase to due limited available housing stock.

Definitions

- **Community (Social) Housing:** Community housing is rent-geared-to-income housing where the rent is based directly on the tenant's income.
- **Local Priority Housing System:** A process in which individuals who urgently require community housing are prioritized.

Questions

1. What is going well with London's community housing waitlist and priority system?

2. What are your ideas for improving London's community housing waitlist and priority system within the next five years?

3. What solutions or suggestions are needed to have your ideas in place?

Additional Notes Page

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End Notes

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- ⁴ For more information about the SPDAT, please visit www.orgcode.com
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- ²¹ Homeless Prevention, Neighbourhood, Children, and Fire Services, City of London. (2018). *London's Emergency Shelters Progress Report: 2011-2017*. Retrieved from: <http://www.london.ca>
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