

<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING ON OCTOBER 28, 2019</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>SANDRA DATARS BERE MANAGING DIRECTOR, HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FREE OF FEAR SERVICES FOR ALL POLICY</b>

**RECOMMENDATION**

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home, the following report on the Implementation of the Free of Fear Services for All policy **BE RECEIVED** for information.

**PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER**

- Consultations Regarding Arrangements for The City of London to Become a Sanctuary City (SPPC: May 29, 2017)
- Arrangements for The City of London to Become a Sanctuary City/Access to Service Without Fear City (SPPC: March 26, 2018)
- Free of Fear Services for All Policy (SPPC: June 25, 2018)
- Council Policy Manual (Corporate Services Committee: May 28, 2019)

**BACKGROUND**

On June 26, 2018, Municipal Council resolved the following:

- Committed to ensure access to municipal services free of fear to non-status immigrants and immigrants with uncertain status;
- Designated the initiative of providing access to municipal services to non-status immigrants or immigrants with uncertain status as Free of Fear Services for All;
- Introduced a bylaw at the Municipal Council meeting of June 26, 2018 which adopted the Council Policy entitled *Free of Fear Services for All*;
- Directed Civic Administration to implement Option #2 as outlined in the staff report dated June 25, 2018; it being noted that the cost of this option will be accommodated within the approved operating budget; and,
- Directed Civic Administration to report back on the results of research and any anticipated long-term program costs as a result of implementing this policy. (2.3/8/SPPC) (2018-S15) (AS AMENDED)

On June 11, 2019, Council further resolved that the policy, *Free of Fear Services for All* be amended to provide for annual reporting and to clarify that the Policy applies to all City services.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the implementation of the *Free of Fear Services for All* policy to date; and report on the results of research undertaken (attached as "Appendix A") and the long-term costs associated with the implementation of this policy.

The *Free of Fear Services for All* policy aligns with the direction of Council's Strategic Plan, in particular the *Strengthening our Community* area of focus and specifically, the objective of creating a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming community.

**The policy directives are as follows:**

- a) Access to City services is not dependent on immigration status.
- b) City Staff will not ask for or otherwise seek out an individual's immigration status, also known as the Non-Disclosure practice unless the provision of such services has a legal requirement to do so. Other options to demonstrate residency as a Londoner will be employed and communicated to residents.

- c) No records of a resident's immigration status will be shared with, or reported to, the London Police Service, Campus Community Police Service, the Ontario Provincial Police, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or the Canadian Border Services Agency, unless required to do so by law.
- d) This policy applies to all City services.

### **Status Update**

The following provides an update on the activities identified in the report of June 25, 2018 to the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee.

### **City Working Group:**

Civic Administration has determined that it is not essential at this time to bring together a working group. Instead, staff are working one-on-one with various divisions as needed, and has provided information on the policy and subsequent training to the Operational Management Team.

### **Data Collection:**

Staff conducted an internal and external survey in April 2019 with agencies and organizations, including City of London Ontario Works Customer Service Representatives, to determine the needs and barriers of individuals without immigration status in accessing services, and how the City of London could make it easier for them to access services. The findings of the survey are attached as "Appendix A". There was a total of 51 respondents.

The results of the surveys indicated that City staff and external agencies had over 700 interactions with individuals with no immigration status or with uncertain immigration status. Currently, due to anonymity and lack of information and tracking, it is hard to conclude that this number truly represents the actual number of individuals in the City. Therefore, it was determined that it would not be possible to measure the number of individuals accessing services either within the Corporation or outside.

Additional data were provided by the Emergency Departments at London Health Sciences Centre on non-status patients and visits:

*"Between April 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2018, preliminary analysis of data from the Emergency Departments (University and Victoria campuses) at London Health Sciences Centre identified 516 visits from 395 unique Canadian residents without health insurance (an average of 86 visits per year). These individuals had a fixed Canadian address and no valid health card number, which meant that they were responsible for paying for their care. This is a conservative estimate based on patients who met all of the following criteria (coded as Canadian Resident, self-pay in health records, valid postal code, <81 years old and not identified as homeless according to International Classification of Diseases (ICD)-10 diagnosis codes). Strict application of these criteria mean that these estimates are likely low (which is further supported by previous research). Additional research would be warranted to better understand the issue."*

### **Staff training and guidelines:**

Civic Administration has demonstrated a commitment to awareness and capacity building through the creation of a training video outlining the *Free of Fear Services for All* policy, its rationale, and a quiz for all staff to complete. This video was rolled out to all staff with access to computers in October, 2019. A resource folder on City Hub has been created which provides staff with additional information and contact information for further assistance. This training will be incorporated into orientation training as future staff are hired.

### **Inventory, Public Awareness and Communication Plan:**

An inventory of municipal services that individuals may access without providing proof of immigration status has been created and will soon be available on the City website. Civic Administration is taking the calculated approach of waiting for staff training to be completed, which is expected before the end of October, as a catalyst for launching the public awareness communication plan. This plan will be rolled out to make residents and agencies working with immigrants aware of the policy.

### **Municipal Network:**

City of London staff are participating in an informal network of staff from municipalities across the country which have or are considering policies that are similar to the *Free of Fear Services for All* policy. The purpose of the network is to share information and best practices in implementing this type of work. The group meets virtually and at the time of immigration conferences.

