Emergency Shelter Discussion

Craig Cooper
Agenda

1. Why we are here?

2. Overview of current emergency shelter system

3. Current community data

4. Considerations for updated emergency shelter system

5. Next steps
Emergency Shelter
- Why are we here -

Project Objective:
• Support the review of London’s emergency shelter system, seek community feedback from those with lived and living experiences, service providers and others.

Challenges:
• Mental health issues, addictions, trauma and violent behaviours of participants are challenging current shelter system
• Demand for emergency shelter system outstrips current available resources.

Goal:
• Work collaboratively with our community collaborators, people with lived and living experience and other organizations to update the current emergency shelter system.
Homelessness in Canada

Source: https://www.homelesshub.ca/blog/infographic-who-are-canadas-homeless
Homelessness in London

- City of London uses the Homeless Individual and Family Information System to document experiences of homelessness and interactions with service system resources.

- As of July 5, 2021, there were a total of **1290 individuals** on the City’s By-Name List.
  - 791 men on BNL
  - 485 women on BNL
  - 14 LGBTQ2+ on BNL
  - 160 individuals in families on the BNL
  - 264 indigenous individuals on the BNL
  - 702 individuals on our Coordinated Access list
  - 408 individuals on our Coordinated Access Priority list

- From April 1, 2020, to July 5, 2021, there were **439 unique unsheltered homeless individuals with no Emergency Shelter stays**.

- As of June 15, 2021, approx. **15% of individuals staying in** current emergency shelter beds for more than one continuous year.
# Current Emergency Shelter System Services

## Current number of emergency shelter beds funded by the City of London (317 in total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelter</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Mission Shelter</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army Centre of Hope</td>
<td>78 men &amp; 20 women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity Project Shelter</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotholme Family Shelter</td>
<td>20 rooms (41 beds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOU Youth Shelter</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Women and Children Shelter Beds Provincially Funded (99 in total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelter</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANOVA Women’s Shelter</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhaawanong Women’s Shelter</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Resting space beds funded by the City of London (40 in total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelter</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LondonCares</td>
<td>20 (10 day + 10 overnight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlohsa</td>
<td>10 overnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Sister’s Place</td>
<td>10 overnight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Transitional Short-Term Rooms (101)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelter</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centre of Hope</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Mission</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emergency Shelter

• Can & must play an essential role within an effective, housing-focused crisis response system

• Responding effectively to homelessness requires a combination of strategies:
  
  • Preventing or diverting people from experiencing homelessness whenever possible;
  
  • Ensuring people transition rapidly from homelessness to housing and services; and
  
  • Providing immediate low-barrier shelter options for people experiencing homelessness who cannot immediately access permanent housing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions to consider about the values &amp; orientation of an emergency shelter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Does emergency shelter system consistently implement practices to meet people where they are, and provide person-centered care that focuses on personal strengths?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What policies or value statements convey clear expectations that guests will be treated with dignity and respect, and how does the shelter monitor adherence to these expectations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are expectations of guests clearly communicated and easily accessible for review by guests?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What specific practices help ensure that the shelter exhibits cultural competency and provides appropriate protections for shelter seekers across demographic differences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the shelter set only minimal and reasonable requirements for guests, and does the shelter enforce these requirements in a fair and transparent way?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does the shelter involve guests in governance and operations?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Low-Barrier Considerations

• Low-barrier shelters emphasize welcoming guests in as they are, while having clear and simple behavioral expectations that apply to anyone residing in the shelter.

• These expectations are narrowly focused on maintaining a safe environment for all.

• Staff are trained in trauma-informed care and de-escalation techniques in order to help residents understand and conform to these expectations.

• Working with outreach teams to engage individuals who are reluctant to access shelter or have high barriers to permanent housing.

• Accommodate partners, pets and possessions.

Why People Avoid Shelter:

• Too Crowded
• Too many rules
• Don’t allow pets
• Limits on personal belongings
• Can’t stay with partner or family
• Under the influence
• Have substance paraphernalia on their person
• Restrictions
Low-Barrier Considerations
- Questions to consider to help lower barriers to accessing emergency shelter

- Does current emergency shelter system have minimal expectations or requirements of people seeking shelter?

- Does current emergency shelter system focus on addressing disruptive or dangerous behaviors rather than compliance to rules or case plans?

- Do shelters welcome self-defined family & kinship groups seeking shelter together?

- Can emergency shelter system support extended or flexible hours and adapted service-delivery models?

- Does current shelter system accommodate pets & belongings?

- Does current shelter intake process and housing navigation services coordinate closely with community-based outreach services and coordinated access?

- Does current shelter system create flexible and predictable access for people seeking shelter?
Emergency Shelter System Considerations

• What is the current system doing well?

• How to support homeless individuals with Mental Health issues, addictions and in the moment crisis?

• What barriers exist that prevent individuals and families from accessing emergency shelter?

• How many emergency shelter beds does our system need?

• How do we focus our emergency shelter system to be both successful in diversion and provision of housing focused shelter?

• Should shelter services be focused on specialized populations? (Chronically Homeless, Indigenous, Women, etc.)
What we have heard so far!

The shelter system in the city needs to:

• Be safe, reduce risks of theft and violence, create a sense of safety
• Provide a safe and stable environment for people to overcome barriers and have onsite resources such as outreach/counselling services
• Provide or link people to housing supports and system navigation
• Provide safe use areas
• Provide more clarity on restrictions to people using shelter
• Provide less barriers to accessing service
What we have heard so far!

The shelter system in the city needs to:

• Provide access to health supports on-site
• Provide access to mental health supports on-site
• Provide access to basic needs on-site (hair cut, etc)
• Provide life skills training on-site
• Provide more intense diversion
What we have heard so far!

Low Barrier:

• means, very loose rules, not structured, and geared towards working with the individual not against them.

• service means everyone can access it if needed no mater what

• means, limited hard rules that must be followed or conditions that must be met, e.g. if currently high, person admitted to a part of shelter that can support them and keep them safe. Outside shelter spaces could be provided for those who cannot tolerate being inside. Safe supply provided so prevent dangerous drug seeking behaviors which prevent being at shelter on time for admission.

• Realizing that creating a low barrier space could create unintended barriers for someone else.
Next Steps

- Link to Surveys (Surveys will remain open to mid-July)
  - Emergency Shelters: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZW5SHK7](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZW5SHK7)
  - Outreach Program: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZN7H3GN](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZN7H3GN)
  - Housing Stability Bank: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/53SCCMR](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/53SCCMR)

- Work continuing with community partners and those with lived and living experience to complete the survey.

- After survey closes city staff will collate all responses and draft the requirements for the formal request for proposal to be released in the fall of 2021.