



## SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>WARDEN AND LAMBTON COUNTY COUNCIL</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>Homelessness Prevention and Social Planning</b>
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	<b>Sarah Churchill, Program Supervisor Ian Hanney, Manager</b>
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<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>September 3, 2025</b>
<b>INFORMATION ITEM:</b>	<b>Homelessness Prevention Update</b>

### **BACKGROUND**

As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (“**CMSM**”), the Social Services Division is responsible for delivering homelessness prevention services in the County of Lambton. In collaboration with numerous community partners, the County provides a range of support to individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. A key priority is to divert individuals from emergency shelters and assist them in securing stable housing. Prevention efforts also include initiatives like rent supplements to help maintain housing stability. Despite these supports, housing precarity and homelessness remain a significant challenge, with nearly 300 individuals currently experiencing homelessness in Lambton County. This report provides an update on the state of the homelessness prevention system in the County of Lambton.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **By-Name List**

The By-Name List (“**BNL**”) is Lambton’s local tool for measuring homelessness. It is a comprehensive, real-time list of every known, consenting individual experiencing homelessness. This number includes individuals sleeping outside, in emergency shelter, and those provisionally accommodated (i.e., couch-surfing) as well as individuals or families without the immediate ability to acquire safe, stable, permanent housing. Lambton’s BNL Data can be viewed on the [monthly data dashboard](#).

As of July 31, 2025, there were 284 individuals experiencing homelessness on the BNL. This represents a decrease of 10 individuals, (↓ 3.4%), from June’s numbers. There were 197 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, representing 69% of the BNL and a decrease of 10 individuals (↓ 4.8%), from June. Chronic homelessness refers to

individuals experiencing homelessness that have had at least six months of homelessness in the past year.

### Community Outreach Team

Homelessness Prevention's Community Outreach Workers primarily assist individuals experiencing absolute homelessness (i.e., sleeping outside). The housing case management provided through this team is delivered directly to individuals residing in the community, meeting them where they are at. Case management is concentrated on progressing the household through the housing continuum for long-term success. Addressing the basic needs of this at-risk population is a vital component of the service as well, achieved through local service referrals, engagement supplies (primarily food security items), and ongoing relationship-building.

During the month of July:

- 82 engagements occurred.
- 60 unique individuals were served. The large majority of these individuals are often provisionally accommodated. Less than 20 currently, consistently reside unsheltered.
- 9 referrals to external services were made.
- 5 coordinated trips with partner outreach teams occurred.
- 5 outreach meetings with partner outreach teams occurred.
- 4 individuals were moved from the street to more permanent housing.
- 2 individuals were moved from the street to emergency shelter beds.

### Community Outreach Meeting

In July, the Homelessness Prevention team hosted local outreach workers at Lambton Shared Services for a coordinated, in-person meeting to discuss assisting individuals experiencing homelessness in extreme heat, emerging encampment sites, and food security needs for individuals experiencing absolute homelessness. These meetings occur online every week, and in-person bi-annually. Partnering teams in attendance include:

- Community Health Integrated Care Team – Bluewater Health and Lambton EMS
- Community Outreach Team – Homelessness Prevention, County of Lambton
- IMPACT Team – Sarnia Police Services
- Outreach Nurse – Lambton Public Health
- Outreach Team – North Lambton Community Health Centre
- Program Coordinator – The Good Shepherd's Lodge Emergency Shelter
- Supervisor – Housing and Homelessness Resource Centre and Overflow Shelter

### Emergency Shelter Capacity

Emergency shelter beds remained in demand throughout the month of July. The Inn of the Good Shepherd is funded through the County of Lambton to operate the following local shelter sites: Good Shepherd's Lodge, 39 beds; Overflow Shelter, 35 beds; Haven Youth Shelter, 9 beds.

Overall occupancy through July 2025 was 80-90%.

### The Integrated Homelessness Prevention Team

The Integrated Homelessness Prevention Team consists of Community Support Workers ("**CSW**") from both Homelessness Prevention and Ontario Works ("**OW**"). These staff serve as either Intensive Case Managers or Rapid Rehousing Workers. Both forms of CSW offer life stabilization support, and work in partnership with local multidisciplinary teams to ensure the health and social needs of these households are addressed.

During the month of July:

- 219 unique individuals received services from CSW,
- 24 individuals were moved into more permanent housing,
- 12 rent supplements were approved to assist individuals to move into more permanent housing.

### Housing and Homelessness Resource Centre ("**HHRC**")

The HHRC is a daytime drop-in program that provides direct support, referrals, and connections to services for individuals experiencing homelessness. HHRC operates from 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. on weekdays.

During the month of July:

- 699 visits were made to the HHRC.
- 126 unique individuals were provided with support at the HHRC.
- 69 referrals were made to support services and community partners.

The following services were available on-site this month:

<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Services Offered</b>
CMHA's Mobile Care Bus	Every other Thursday	Primary healthcare services
Community Legal Assistance Sarnia	Every Thursday	Legal aid and advocacy services
Emmanuel Presbyterian Church	Every Friday	Counselling and office hours

<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Services Offered</b>
House of Sophrosyne	Every other Tuesday	Women's addiction recovery
NLCHC's Outreach Team	Every other Tuesday	Hepatitis C supports, education
John Howard Society	Every Thursday	Bail supervision and reintegration

Referrals and connections were also made to OW, Ontario Disability Support Program, primary healthcare teams, local landlords, Bluewater Health Withdrawal Management, Bluewater Health's Assertive Community Treatment Team, the Community Health Integrated Care Team, the Sarnia Police IMPACT Team, and the Inn of the Good Shepherd's Soup Kitchen and Food Bank programs.

### The HART Hub

As Lambton County continues to reinforce local homelessness prevention efforts and collaborate with community partners, coordinated efforts are turning towards the forthcoming Lambton HART Hub, a significant provincial investment in local services. The Lambton HART Hub will contain a suite of services, including an augmentation of the existing HHRC service hub.

This service hub will operate through a continuum of care model that includes primary care, mental health and addictions care, mental health and addictions supportive housing referrals, employment, social services, and services to meet basic needs, all under one roof. With the addition of up to 26 supportive housing units (facilitated by Indwell, Housing Services, and CMHA) and 30 transitional recovery beds (Bluewater Health), the HART Hub will markedly increase housing stability and treatment capacity in our region.

Bluewater Health, Canadian Mental Health Association, County of Lambton, North Lambton Community Health Centre, and the Sarnia-Lambton Ontario Health Team are partners in this initiative and continue to meet regarding operations and critical facilities needs in anticipation of Lambton receiving allocated provincial HART Hub funding in the coming weeks.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

Not applicable.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

The activities of the Division support the Community Development Area of Effort #3 in the County of Lambton's Strategic Plan, specifically:

- Strengthening the County's advocacy and lobbying efforts with other levels of government to raise the profile of the County and its needs to secure improved senior government supports, funding, grants, and other resources to meet emerging infrastructure and service needs;
- Consulting with the community and stakeholders on ways to increase housing options and affordability, and innovative programs and initiatives that focus on poverty reduction and promote social belonging;
- Supporting the development of a variety of affordable housing to meet demand;
- Implementing, monitoring and updating community health and wellness-related plans and priorities, including, but not limited to, the *Housing and Homelessness Plan*, *Community Safety & Well-Being Plan*, the Long-Term Care division's mission, vision, and values, *Age Friendly Community Planning* framework, Lambton Public Health's strategic priorities, *Lambton Drug & Alcohol Strategy*, *Lambton EMS Master Plan*, and *Child Care and Early Years 5-Year Service System Plan*; and
- Advocating for, and supporting access to, mental health and addiction services.

## **CONCLUSION**

Lambton continues to make meaningful progress in addressing homelessness and housing insecurity, through strong partnerships and integrated service delivery. The forthcoming Lambton HART Hub and Affordable Housing Plan will further expand local capacity. Together, these efforts will further the Social Services Division's vision that every person in Lambton has an affordable, suitable and adequate home.