

## Minutes

### The Regional Municipality of Durham Durham Advisory Committee on Homelessness COVID-19 Homelessness Response Network April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

#### In Attendance:

Erin Valant	Region of Durham
Stephanie Ross	Region of Durham
Alyx Riddell	Region of Durham
Councillor Bob Chapman	City of Oshawa
Adrianna Vanderneut	Durham Youth Housing & Support Services
Mona Emond	North House
Vanessa Bilenduke	Community Development Council Durham
Ryan Rayner	Durham Regional Police Services
Jessica Robinson	Community Living Durham North
Theresa Mcleod-Treadwell	Salvation Army
Sam Kwan	VHA Home HealthCare
Doreen Hume McKenna	Durham Mental Health Services
Kerrie Wriker	CMHA Durham
Rob Brglez	Cornerstone Community Association
Alyssa Skan	Cornerstone Community Association
Marla Waters	Christian Faith Outreach Centre
Rob Adams	Durham Mental Health Services
Maureen Bandola	John Howard Society Durham
Kelly O'Brien	Income & Employment Support
Rev. David Moore	Simcoe Street Church- United Church of Canada
Barb Fannin	United Way Durham
Susanne Groen	YWCA Durham

#### COVID-19 Emergency Shelter Response

##### Shelter operator/ warming centre updates

- Discussion regarding lower than average occupancy rates at shelters
- Discussion regarding senior clients that do not have underlying health conditions

##### Hotel Isolation Updates

- Entire floor of hotel has been pre-booked (18 rooms)
- After further research and consultation, we will continue to use the hotel model as isolation space for homeless residents that are pending COVID-19 test results, have the virus, or who have been instructed by Public Health to self-isolate.
- This will ensure the best possible physical distancing for clients, minimize risk of exposure for staff, etc.
- Moving forward, the hotel model will need to have on-site staffing to facilitate food deliveries and be available via phone for any clients that may need something to help ensure isolation measures are followed.

- Community Care Durham is able to provide food services
- Durham College is also able to provide food services for the site.
- Mental health supports can also be provided virtually for clients.

#### Camp Samac Facility Update

- Camp Samac will be used as additional bed space for shelters/ warming centres to expand capacity while ensuring physical distancing.
- Two lodges have been secured to facilitate this.
- Durham College is able to provide full food services for the site.
- On-site security and cleaning services are being procured.
- We are looking for available staffing to help operationalize this site. Please contact the Homelessness Initiatives Team if your organization has an opportunity to redeploy staff or increase staff numbers to assist at this site.
- Conversation regarding harm reduction and substance use at the site.

### **COVID-19 Unsheltered Response**

#### Centralized locations for washroom/ shower facility update

- *Pickering*: Dunbarton Indoor Pool
- *Ajax*: Ajax Community Centre
- *Whitby*: Iroquois Sports for washroom/ showers and McKinney Centre for portable washrooms
- *Oshawa*: Backdoor Mission. Also expanded to include onsite health supports, led by CMHA.
  - There is a need for volunteers to supervise washrooms in early evening hours at Backdoor Mission
  - The Refuge has also been identified as good place for portable washrooms. Currently procuring facilities and security.

### **COVID-19 Relief Response**

- The Housing Stability Program (CDCD) is anticipating an increase in applications for rental and utility arrears as a result of COVID-19. While we urge partner agencies to work with their clients on paying their rent during this time, we are also looking at ways we can support this anticipated increase in need.
- CDCD is looking for feedback from partners:
  1. With COVID-19, what barriers are you seeing with your clients that are impacting their ability to pay their rent and utility bills?
  2. If these barriers do not currently fit within the HSP guidelines, what changes would need to be made to help support those impacted by COVID-19?

### **PPE for homelessness support providers**

- Please provide more details when ordering PPE from Stephanie, including:
  - A description of the required items such as size of gloves, type of masks, etc.
  - Quantity of items requested

- Send orders to Stephanie by Friday of each week to be placed in the following Monday's order
  - All items ordered may not be filled. Orders are filled based on available supply.

## **Funding**

### CHPI funding: \$2.83M

- A portion of this funding is being used to secure hotel spaces for isolation measures, ensure washroom and shower facilities are available for unsheltered residents, support the expansion of the emergency shelter system, etc.

### Reaching Home funding: \$1.86M

- A portion of this funding is being used to obtain PPE for homelessness support providers, secure hotel spaces for isolation measures, etc.

### Community Response Fund

- We are working to make a portion of funds available to non-profit organizations in Durham Region supporting vulnerable and homeless residents or residents at-risk of homelessness during COVID-19.
- Details will be shared as plans are finalized.
  - Discussion on priority setting and identifying needs in the homelessness support system.

## **General Discussion**

- Tax information
  - Residents can call 211 and ask specifically for Durham Region tax help
  - Ontario Works can link their clients with tax information
  - North House can assist clients in North Durham
  - Other tax options being explored
- Housing Outreach Programs: What are agencies seeing?
  - Outreach workers are still steady with assisting clients with landlord and roommate issues
  - Increasing difficulties finding housing placements in rooming houses during COVID-19 for single clients.
    - Discussion on ways we can improve this.
- Unsheltered Residents: What are agencies seeing?
  - There is a decrease in shelter occupancy at this time. More people are finding other places to stay (friends or family).
  - There may also be an increase in the number of people living unsheltered who are choosing to not access shelter.
    - Discussion on ways we can improve this.

## **Next Meeting**

- Monday, April 20th from 1:00pm-3:00pm
- Send any agenda items to [Alyxandra.Riddell@durham.ca](mailto:Alyxandra.Riddell@durham.ca) by end of day Thursday to be added to the following Monday's agenda