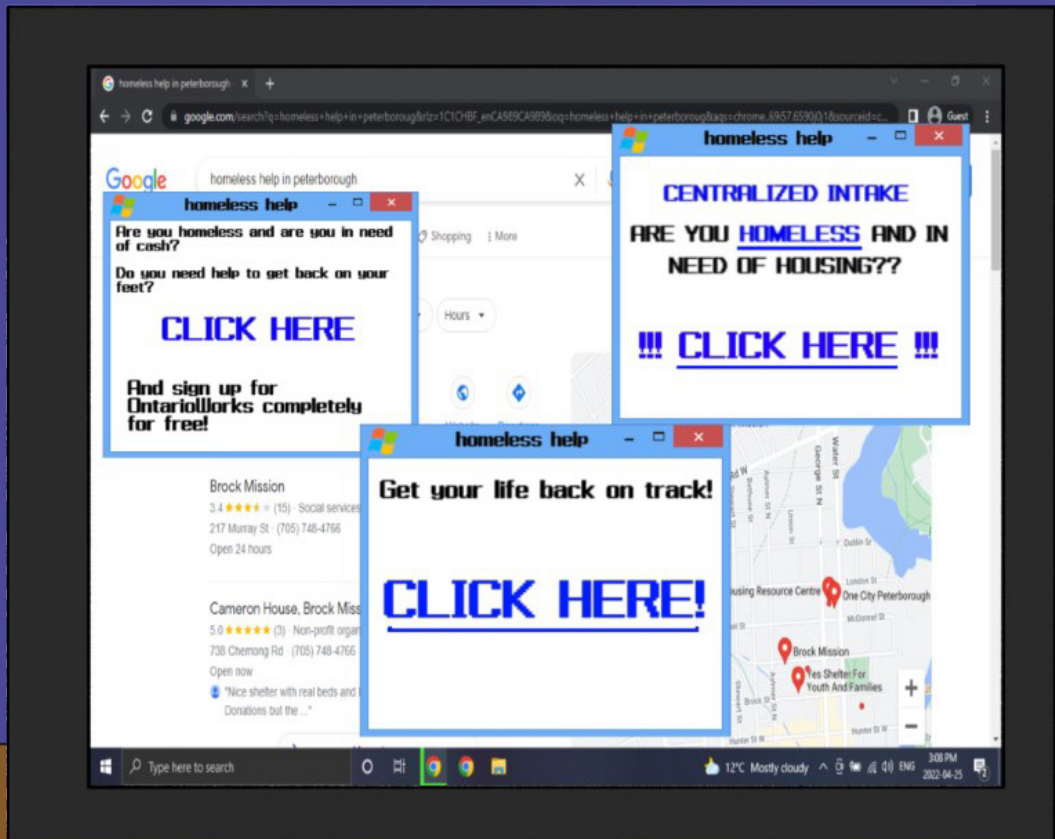


Get In Line

A Guide to Peterborough's System for
Housing and Sheltering the Unhoused

By: The BfE SuperCrew



RESEARCH FOR
Social Change
LAB



The Research for Social Change Lab is a community-engaged research collective in pursuit of justice and equity in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough — the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig First Nations.

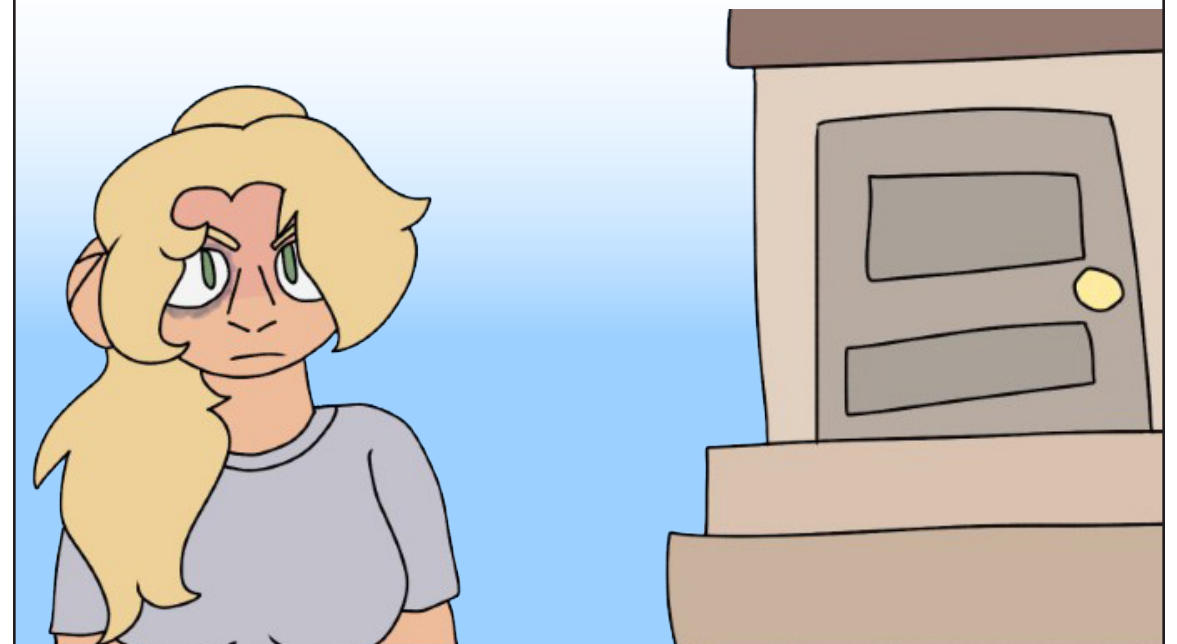
www.socialchangelab.ca

This book and the research it draws on is supported by a SSHRC-funded project titled "Building from Experience: Youth-led strategies for homelessness prevention"

Get In Line

A Guide to Peterborough's Coordinated
Access and Emergency Shelter Systems

Thank you for picking up this zine and your interest in it. It is our hope that it will be helpful to the community. This zine is about how the shelter and housing systems are designed to work officially, collecting information from many places and putting as much relevant information in one place.



Meet the Authors: The BfE Super Crew

The Building from Experience (BfE) Super Crew at the Research for Social Change Lab are a neuro-diverse team with a range of lived experiences that we draw on as resources for this project. Some of us grew up in Peterborough; others grew up in the West. One of us is Indigenous and grew up in the foster care system. Collectively, we represent a spectrum of gender identities. All of us strive for equity and social justice.



Marisa Mackenzie strives for change in the community by helping others and empowering those around her. It is her hope that this work will help bring about positive change. **Fun fact:** Marisa can build and program computers.

Will Pearson is curious about how systems work, and he believes transparency is essential to ensuring equitable service provision. **Fun fact:** Will can solve a Rubik's Cube in less than a minute.



Naomi Nichols is drawn to this work because the government has created a bureaucratic shelter system that is hard to understand. She wants to make it easier to understand so that the community can assess if it's working. **Fun fact:** Naomi can do 20 push ups.*

* Some conditions apply.

Joey Lavictoire likes this project because they can finally share their experiences with others and help others who have been in the same spot and learn about their experiences. **Fun fact:** Joey likes to write in their spare time.



Sam Blondeau enjoys lifting the voices of those with lived experience in the community, while raising awareness of the housing crisis. **Fun fact:** Sam comes from Peterborough's Halloween family.

Thamer Linklater wants to understand the systems in place and how to change them. **Fun fact:** Thamer can read a 200-page book in an hour.



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In the current context, housing is a scarce resource — unfortunately. That means we need to make decisions about how to allocate the housing resources we have.

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This system distributes housing resources to the people who are thought to have the highest level of need.

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This system is meant to provide temporary, emergency shelter while people wait for more permanent housing.

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Methods, acknowledgments, and what's next!

Introduction

As of April 2022, at least 314 people were experiencing homelessness in the City and County of Peterborough. There were more than 1,500 people waiting for rent-geared-to-income housing. And with a vacancy rate of 1% and average rents climbing, there were practically no apartments available in the local private market that were affordable for someone who made minimum wage.

Statistics alone can't capture the crisis. No number conveys the disruption, uncertainty, mental distress and negative health impacts that precarious housing can cause. And just one person without a home is already too many. Still, these numbers show how our society's current approach to housing is failing. More and more people are finding themselves in need of help to secure adequate and affordable housing in our community.

This zine is about the local system designed to house people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. This system connects people to public resources (such as affordable apartments, rent supplements, or housing supports) that can help them to maintain stable housing.

Unfortunately, there are more people that need help than there are resources to offer. That means one major job for this system is to decide who could benefit from these resources the most, and then allocate them accordingly.

Of all the people who are homeless in Peterborough, who gets a subsidized apartment when one becomes available? If there's only one bed left at a downtown shelter, who gets it? One goal of this zine is to peel back the curtain on how these kinds of questions are answered in our community.

This zine is part of a wider project aiming to describe and map the policies, rules, procedures and practices that govern the distribution of housing resources in Peterborough. Our goal is to

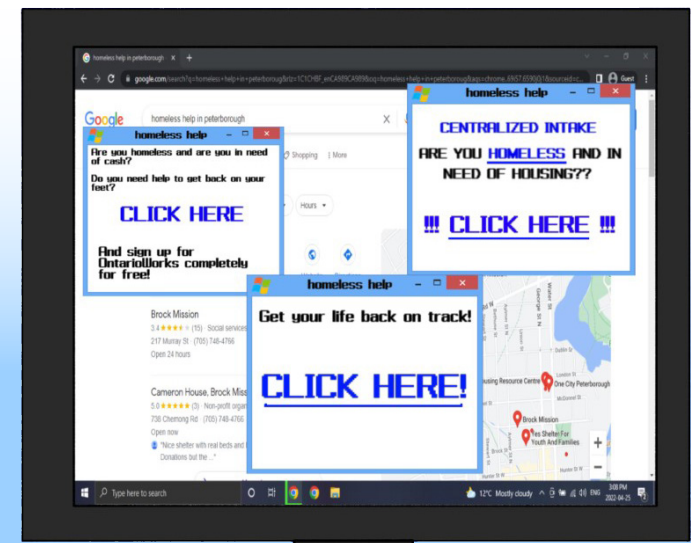
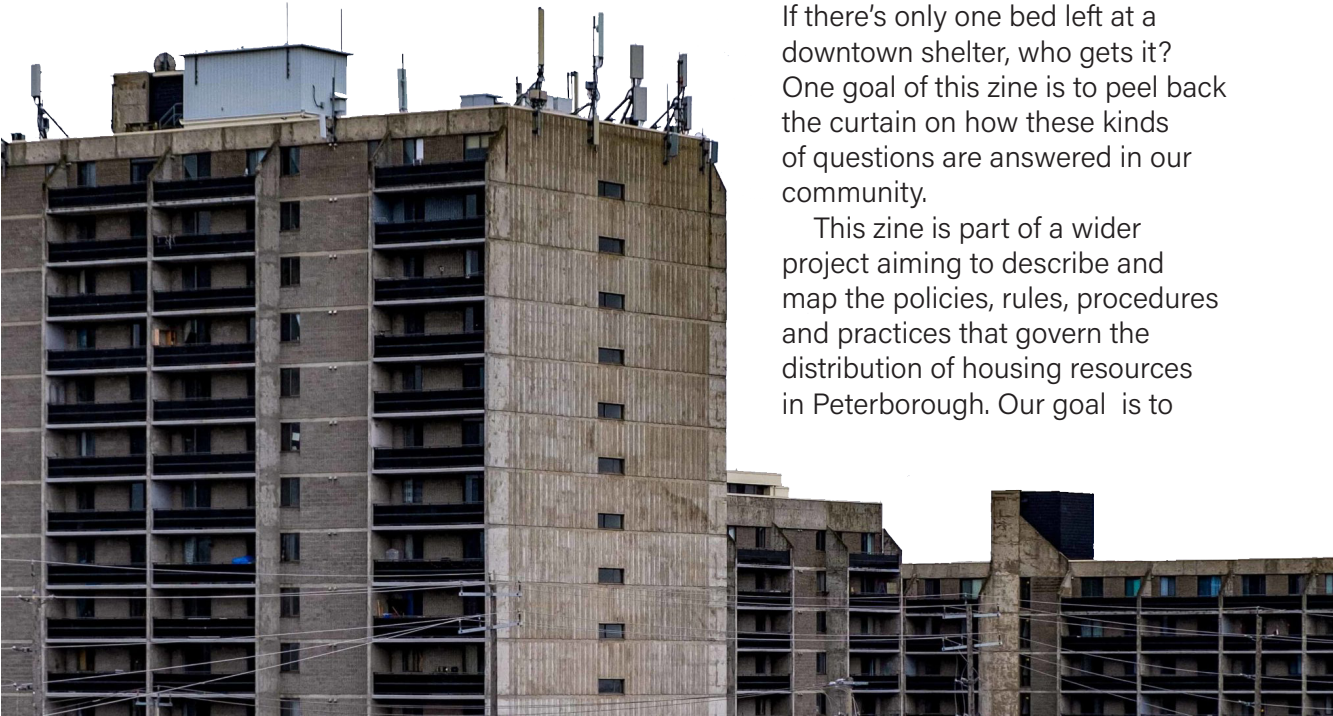
assess this system in the context of our community's legal obligation to realize the human right to housing. At the heart of our project is the question: Are Peterborough's housing and homelessness systems helping or hindering efforts to realize local residents' right to housing? And how can we do better?

In this zine, we focus on Peterborough's Coordinated Access and Emergency Shelter systems. But it's important to recognize that these aren't the only government programs involved in the provision of housing. In fact, as emergency systems designed to be a last line of defence against homelessness, Coordinated Access and Emergency Shelter are among the most under-resourced of all housing-related government initiatives.

But the other systems aren't housing everyone, and some are actually increasing the risk of homelessness. The waitlist for supportive housing through Developmental Services Ontario is upwards of 20 years. Climbing to the top of the centralized waitlist for social housing can take more than a decade. And the criminal-legal system often destabilizes lives in ways that push people into homelessness. This zine isn't about these other systems. But it's important not to forget about them, because they play a role, too.

The BfE Supecrew will continue to share its findings in forthcoming zines. Please keep an eye out for them! And don't forget: Housing is a human right!

— Marisa, Thamer, Will, Sam, Joey, and Naomi



Getting Housing: Coordinated Access

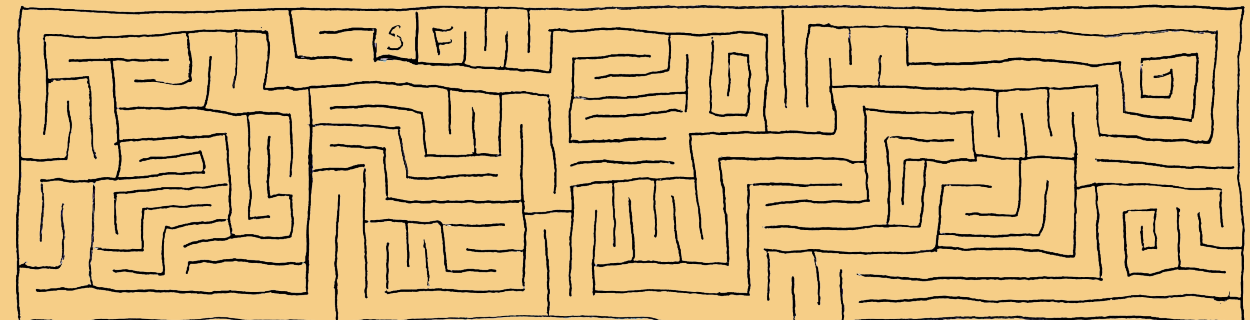
What is Coordinated Access?

It's a process used by many communities (including Peterborough) to connect people who are homeless to housing resources. Coordinated Access has four main elements:

- A **"Housing First"** philosophy that views housing as a fundamental right
- **Real time data** — that is, up-to-date lists of a) people who need housing and b) the housing that is available
- **A standardized process for assessing housing need** and determining whose needs are greatest
- **A transparent process for prioritizing who gets housing** by matching people to resources that will meet their needs

Coordinated access systems are becoming very common in Canada. That's partly because some federal funding programs require communities use them. For example, as a designated Reaching Home community and Built for Zero community, Peterborough is committed to using a coordinated access approach.

While every coordinated access system shares the four elements listed above, different communities deploy coordinated access in different ways. Next, we'll take a look at Peterborough's implementation of coordinated access.



The By Name Priority List (BNPL)

In Peterborough, the heart of the coordinated access system is our By Name Priority List (BNPL). The BNPL is a ranked list of people who are experiencing homelessness locally at any one time. "Ranked" means people are scored and sorted based on the severity of their housing need and other vulnerabilities. The higher someone's assessed need is, the sooner they'll be offered housing.

Q: Who can get on the list?

A: Anyone who is homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. This includes people who are provisionally sheltered — if they're couch surfing, for example. You must also be a resident of the City or County of Peterborough or show a "meaningful connection" to Peterborough.

Q: How can the list tell how badly I need housing?

A: At intake, a worker will do an assessment involving questions about your housing situation, your personal history, your health and other topics.

Q: How do you get on the list?

A: Most local social service agencies can add you to the list, as long as staff there are willing and able to complete the intake process with you. Once you're on the list, you must check in at least every three months. If you don't engage with the system for three months, you'll be removed.

Q: Where is the BNPL stored?

A: Peterborough's BNPL is stored in a municipally-managed database called the Homeless Individuals and Family Information System (HIFIS). It is secure, and governed by provincial privacy laws.

Prioritization

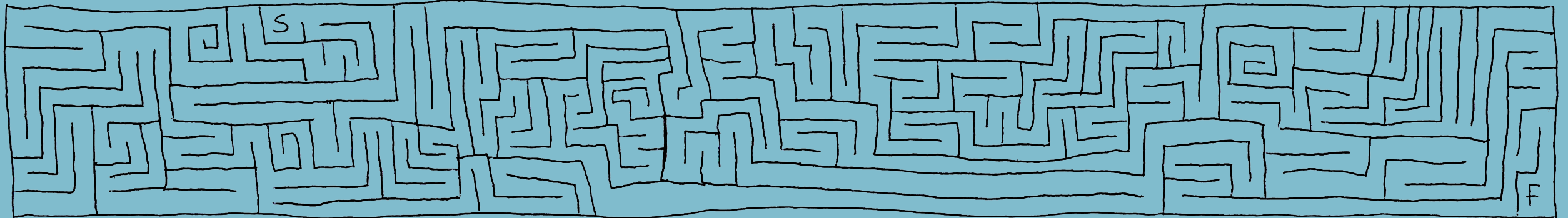
Being on the By Name Priority List gives you access to dedicated housing resources that aren't available to anyone else. The City of Peterborough reserves certain affordable apartments, rent supplements and housing supports to people who are on the list.

When a BNPL housing resource becomes available, system coordinators turn to the list to decide who gets it. But the system doesn't just recommend whoever's waited the longest. The BNPL takes into consideration factors such as age, current sleeping arrangements and health status to prioritize those who are thought to need the resource the most.

How do these rankings work? In Peterborough, the following things are prioritized:

- 1. Chronicity** People who have been homeless for 6 months or more in the last year (the 6 months don't have to be consecutive)
- 2. Current sleeping arrangements** People who are currently unsheltered (i.e., sleeping outside)
- 3. Tri-morbidity** People who have three concurrent health challenges
- 4. Age** People who are under 25 or over 64
- 5. Vulnerability** People who have a high VI-SPDAT score
- 6. Addition date** People who completed the BNPL intake form before others on the list

For more on how these prioritization categories work, turn the page ...

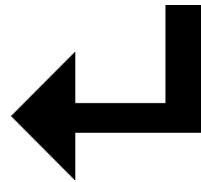


PRIORITY 1 – HIGH (YOUTH OR SENIOR)		
Chronic	Unsheltered Homeless	Tri-morbid ✓ Mental Health Issues ✓ Physical Health Issues ✓ Substance Use
Sorted by: VI-SPDAT Score and Date Added to List		
PRIORITY 1 – LOW (Adults Aged 25-64)		
Chronic	Unsheltered Homeless	Tri-morbid ✓ Mental Health Issues ✓ Physical Health Issues ✓ Substance Use
Sorted by: VI-SPDAT Score and Date Added to List		
PRIORITY 2 – HIGH (YOUTH OR SENIOR)		
Chronic	Unsheltered Homeless	Not Tri-morbid
Sorted by: VI-SPDAT Score and Date Added to List		
PRIORITY 2 – LOW (Adults Aged 25-64)		
Chronic	Unsheltered Homeless	Not Tri-morbid
Sorted by: VI-SPDAT Score and Date Added to List		
PRIORITY 3 – HIGH (YOUTH OR SENIOR)		
Chronic	Sheltered Homeless	Tri-morbid ✓ Mental Health Issues ✓ Physical Health Issues ✓ Substance Use
Sorted by: VI-SPDAT Score and Date Added to List		
PRIORITY 3 – LOW (Adults Aged 25-64)		
Chronic	Sheltered Homeless	Tri-morbid ✓ Mental Health Issues ✓ Physical Health Issues ✓ Substance Use
Sorted by: VI-SPDAT Score and Date Added to List		
PRIORITY 4 – HIGH (YOUTH OR SENIOR)		
Chronic	Sheltered Homeless	Not Tri-morbid
Sorted by: VI-SPDAT Score and Date Added to List		
PRIORITY 4 – LOW (Adults Aged 25-64)		
Chronic	Sheltered Homeless	Not Tri-morbid
Sorted by: VI-SPDAT Score and Date Added to List		
PRIORITY 5 - (Adults Aged 25-64)		
Not Chronic	Any Homelessness	Tri-morbid ✓ Mental Health Issues ✓ Physical Health Issues ✓ Substance Use
Sorted by: VI-SPDAT Score and Date Added to List		
PRIORITY 6 - (Adults Aged 25-64)		
Not Chronic	Any Homelessness	Not Tri-morbid
Sorted by: VI-SPDAT Score and Date Added to List		

Q: What is “Tri-Morbidity”?

A: Tri-morbid describes anyone who has all of the following: physical health challenges, mental health challenges, and problematic substance use.

This priority matrix governs who gets BNPL housing when it becomes available.



Q: What is SPDAT and VI-SPDAT?

A: SPDAT stands for “Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool.” It’s an assessment survey used by service providers to determine the housing and support needs of their clients.

SPDAT assessments are an intensive process. A VI-SPDAT is a quicker, triage version that can be used when service providers don’t know a client well enough or don’t have enough time to do a full SPDAT assessment.

To get on Peterborough’s By Name Priority List, you must complete an intake assessment involving a VI-SPDAT. A full SPDAT assessment might follow.



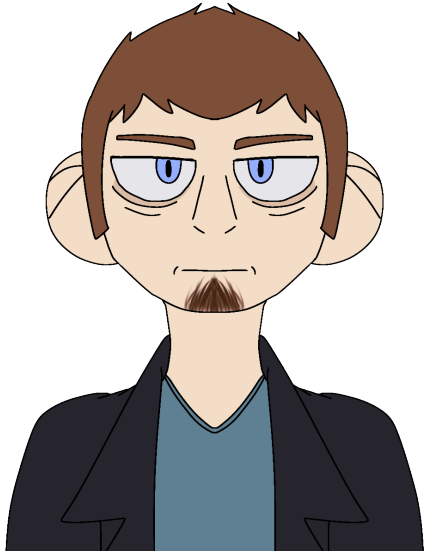
Sam is a 29-year-old trans-man with a physical disability. He has been couchsurfing and using the emergency shelter system ever since his landlord found out he was using drugs and evicted him 8 months ago. At intake, he was assessed as **chronically homeless** and **sheltered**. Since losing his housing, Sam’s mental health has deteriorated because he hasn’t been sleeping well. He lost his job. Same was assessed as **tri-morbid** at intake, and he scored very high on his VI-SPDAT.

If a housing unit that was appropriate for Sam became available, he might get it, but he also might not. Sam’s age and his decision to stay in a shelter mean he is in the “Priority Three – Low” category. If there are people in higher levels who are also eligible for the unit, they’d be offered it first.



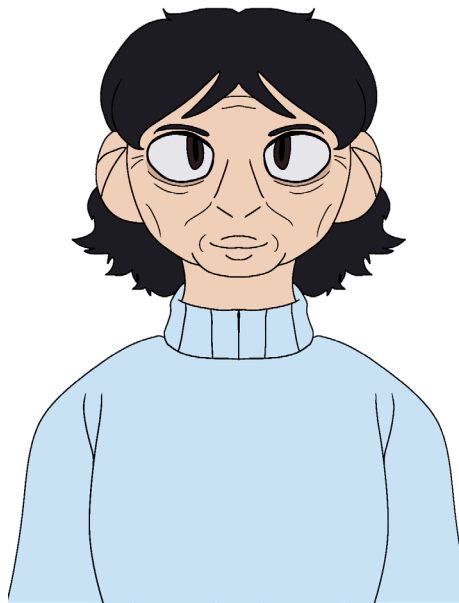
Tamara is 18 years old, so she is a **youth**. In Peterborough, youth are always prioritized as if they were **chronically homeless**, even if they aren’t. Tamara has stayed at the YES Shelter before, but more recently she’s been tenting on private property so she can keep her dog with her. That means she is **unsheltered**. At intake, Tamara was assessed as **tri-morbid** because she disclosed that she: A) is pregnant; B) has a borderline personality disorder diagnosis; and C) is trying to stop using drugs because she is pregnant.

If a supportive housing unit for youth became available and Tamara was eligible for it, she would be very likely to receive it, because she is a youth, chronically homeless, unsheltered and tri-morbid, which places her in “Priority One – High.”



Arthur is 37. He recently served three months in jail. When he was released, he'd lost his apartment, so he was discharged from the Central East Correctional Facility to the Brock Mission. But there weren't any beds available there. He decided to camp in a public park instead, making him **unsheltered**. Arthur uses stimulants, a habit he started in his 20s to manage his ADHD. His drug use doesn't cause major issues in his life, however, and so he was not assessed as tri-morbid. He also scored relatively low on his VI-SPDAT.

Even if an adult transitional housing unit becomes available, Arthur is unlikely to be offered it. Since he isn't chronically homeless and isn't tri-morbid, he is categorized as Priority 6.



Didi is 66, which makes her a **senior**. She hasn't had a home in more than a year, but she is scared to use the shelter system so she sleeps wherever she can: in doorways, in private outbuildings, under parked cars, and in abandoned buildings. That means she is **unsheltered** and **chronically homeless**. Didi does not consume drugs or alcohol. She uses a cane and often feels anxious and disoriented when she's slept poorly, but she is not considered tri-morbid. Her VI-SPDAT score was medium.

If suitable BNPL housing became available, it's fairly likely Didi will be offered it. She is Priority 2 – High. But since she wasn't assessed as tri-morbid, that keeps her out of the highest priority category.

What can the BNPL get for people?

The whole point of the BNPL is to match people who are experiencing homelessness to resources that can help them obtain and maintain housing. This is especially important in today's rental market, where people who have experienced homelessness can face discrimination trying to rent apartments for themselves. By reserving housing specifically for people who are homeless, the Coordinated Access system can ensure people won't be turned away due to mental health issues or spotty rental history, for example. So ... what resources are dedicated to the BNPL? Generally speaking, they fall into three main categories: physical units (affordable apartments), rent supplements, and support services.

Affordable Apartments

Local non-profit agencies (and in a couple of cases, the City of Peterborough) reserve apartments and rooms in congregate living facilities so they are available to people on the BNPL. Currently, our community has access to about 20 housing units and 40 rooms in congregate living settings dedicated to the BNPL.

Rent Supplements

These days, even "affordable" units with below-market rents are still too expensive. Rent supplements are an additional tool to make them more affordable. They are subsidies that pay a portion of someone's rent. Currently, the City directs about \$200,000 worth of rent supplements annually to the BNPL.

Housing Supports

The transition to housing isn't always easy, especially for people who have been homeless a long time, or who have mental health and addictions challenges. To ensure a successful shift into housing, supports such as counselling, housekeeping, or crisis intervention might be necessary. These supports are delivered by local agencies. Support levels vary — some people need just a little extra help while getting used to living on their own; others might need permanent, ongoing supports.

NOTE: The resources above are all delivered through specific programs run by local agencies. These programs have their own eligibility criteria and rules. To be eligible for the resources, you must also meet the program-specific criteria and follow the program rules. For some people on the BNPL, this greatly constrains what the BNPL can actually offer them.

On the next page, we'll lay out all of the different programs in Peterborough that house people from the BNPL.

The BNPL Inventory

These charts are a comprehensive account of Peterborough's BNPL inventory, including which agencies deliver the resources and what the eligibility requirements are. The programs on the right page come with dedicated housing units. The programs on the left page don't, but they do come with help finding a unit in the private market. Every program comes with a rent supplement to ensure affordability. Clients can only access one program at a time. Don't forget to read the annotations!

Leases for the units are governed by the Residential Tenancies Act.

That means the housing is as permanent as the RTA allows, and sometimes clients lose their housing. If they do, they can continue receiving their supports while they look for new housing.

Supports

These support services do not come with dedicated housing — program participants must find their own housing in the private market. However, these program spots do come with rent supplements to make the housing affordable.

Name	Provider	Description	Eligibility
ASH/MASH	FourCAST	24 program spots	Very High acuity, substance use
Home for Good Chronic	FourCAST	10 program spots	Adults 25+, Very High acuity
Housing Now	FourCAST	8 program spots	Adults 25+, Very High acuity
Housing Now for Youth	FourCAST	8 program spots	Youth, Very High Acuity

FourCAST provides the support services. But it also helps build relationships with landlords to make finding a unit easier.

These units are separate from the shelter spaces ~~at~~ also offered at these locations. But some of the same rules apply. For example, no drugs or alcohol are allowed.

Most units on this page are "transitional housing" programs. Instead of a lease, participants sign a program agreement, and they must abide by program expectations. Housing isn't permanent — but can sometimes last up to five years.

Housing Units

Together with local agencies, the City has dedicated the following housing units to people on the BNPL. All of these units come with a rent supplement to make them more affordable, and they come with varying levels of housing supports, as well.

"Acuity" is determined by SPDAT assessments

Program rules for these rooms include: No violence, keep up on chores and no drugs or alcohol on-site.

Name	Provider	Description	Eligibility
Brock Mission SIL	Brock Mission Men's Shelter	15 rooms in congregate living	Male, High to Very High acuity
Cameron House SIL	Cameron House Women's Shelter	8 rooms in congregate living	Female, Low to High acuity.
Clossilla Ave Apartments	City of Peterborough	2 units — 2-bedrooms each	Family
Park Place Apartments	CMHA	4 single occupancy units	Self identifies as LGBTQ2S+
Downie Street Apartments	City of Peterborough via Private Landlord	2 units — 2-bedrooms	Family
Elizabeth Fry Housing	Elizabeth Fry Society	TBD	TBD
John Howard Society Housing	John Howard Society	6 rooms in congregate living	Male, Low to Mid acuity
The Mount Housing	City of Peterborough via the Mount	2 units — 1-bedroom each	TBD
Rubidge Street Apartments	City of Peterborough via Private Landlord	10 units — a bachelor and 9 1-bedrooms	TBD
Youth Rise Community	YES Shelter	3 rooms in congregate living and 13 units (1 and 2-bedroom)	Youth, Low to Mid acuity
Youth Rise Upstairs	YES Shelter	5 rooms in congregate living	Youth, Very High acuity
Youth Rise Indigenous	YES Shelter	3 rooms in congregate living	Youth, Low to Mid acuity, self-identifies as indigenous

These units are almost ready.

For ages 16-23. If you turn 24 while here, you have to move out, but you might be offered other BNPL housing — if you're eligible.

"Congregate" means you get your own room, but share other living space with other program participants.



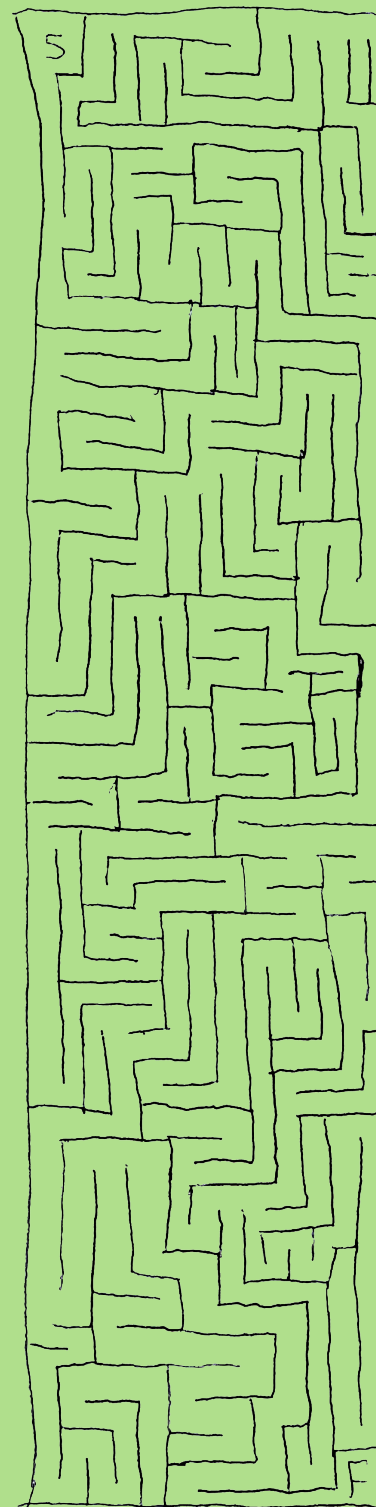
As a young person with a baby on the way, **Tamara** is eligible for one of the 13 apartments in the YES Shelter's RISE transitional housing program. She hopes there is a vacancy there soon.



As an adult male with a medium acuity score, **Arthur** isn't eligible for very many BNPL resources. In fact, there's only one program he could qualify for: The John Howard Society's 6-room congregate living facility for men. But this is a new facility, and it's already full. Arthur hopes when the next room there opens up, he'll be offered it. But that might take years. And it isn't a sure thing; there are other men eligible for that resource on the BNPL, and they might be assessed to have higher need than Arthur.



Sam was assessed to have very high acuity. That means he could be eligible for one of the 15 transitional housing units at the Brock Mission. However, those units come with rules that prohibit on-site substance use and possession, which could pose trouble for Sam. A better option for him might be FourCAST's permanent supportive housing program. But to succeed in the FourCAST program, a private-sector landlord will have to agree to rent to Sam — and that's not a sure bet.



Matching

When a spot in a BNPL housing program becomes available, this process is supposed to be followed:

First, a system coordinator filters the BNPL to exclude people who are ineligible for the resource (filtering out adults if it's a youth unit, for example). Then, they use the priority matrix to identify the top four eligible candidates, and send these four names to the service provider with the vacancy.

The service provider uses their discretion to choose someone from this shortlist of four. But, there are rules in place to ensure people aren't repeatedly denied housing at this stage of the process. Once an individual or family makes a shortlist for the fourth time, their name will be the only one given to the service provider.

The service provider will spend up to 14 days trying to locate the individual or family to offer them housing, after which time it will consider other people from the shortlist.

How long does it take?

Accessing housing through the By Name Priority List can take a long time. One set of data suggested that it takes an average of a year to be offered housing.

Ultimately, though, it depends on what priority level you are placed in, what programs you are eligible for, and what units become vacant.

For a unit or program spot to become available, someone has to move out of it. With rents so high and the vacancy rate so low in Peterborough, that doesn't happen very often.

Emergency Shelter

Moving from homelessness to housing through the By Name Priority List can take a long time. With the housing market as expensive as it is right now, it's not easy for people to move out of BNPL housing, which means spots don't open up very often. And if you aren't in one of the top priority levels, you may never be offered anything.

If you're couch surfing or have some other temporary housing, then you might be able to wait. But if you need a place to stay right away, the City's emergency shelter system might be an option.

The intake system for Peterborough's emergency shelters runs parallel to the City's Coordinated Access system. They're related, but independent. That means you can use the shelter system without pursuing housing through the BNPL, and you can also pursue housing through the BNPL but never use the shelters.

The City of Peterborough funds four emergency shelters. Lately, the total number of beds in these shelters has been shifting as COVID-19 precautions impact capacity limits. As of spring 2022, there were 92 beds — but since different shelters have different eligibility criteria, these 92 beds aren't available to everyone.

When there isn't a shelter bed available for a client who needs one, they might be offered one night in a motel instead. The motels are generally on Highway 7, just outside of town.

Q: Who can stay in Peterborough's shelters?

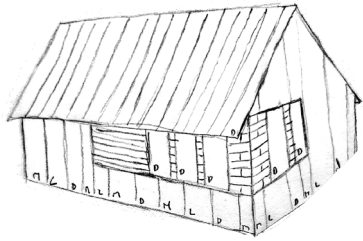
A: Anyone who is homeless in Peterborough and doesn't have any other options for shelter is eligible for a bed in an emergency shelter. The only information you must give is a name and a birthday.

You do not need to complete a SPDAT assessment. You do not need to be a Canadian citizen. You do not need to have ID. You do not need to sign up to be on Peterborough's By Name Priority List.

You must, however, live in Peterborough or have a "meaningful connection" to Peterborough. Individuals without such a connection might be given a shelter bed for one night in emergency situations, but they are expected to bus back to their home community the next day.

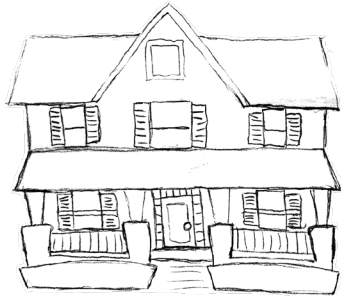


What Shelters Exist?



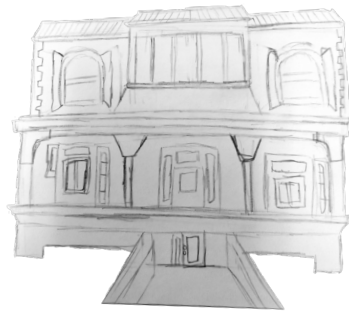
Brock Mission

- For men ages 24 and up
- 32 beds available
- Open 24/7
- Meals provided, laundry and shower facilities available



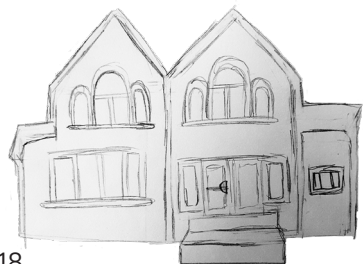
Cameron House

- For women ages 24 and up
- 7 beds available
- Open 24/7
- Operated by Brock Mission



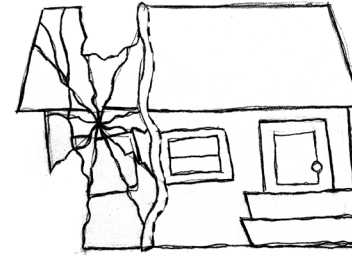
YES Shelter

- For youth (ages 23 and lower) and families
- 15 beds for youth
- 15 beds for families
- Open 24/7
- Meals provided, laundry and shower facilities available



Overflow Shelter

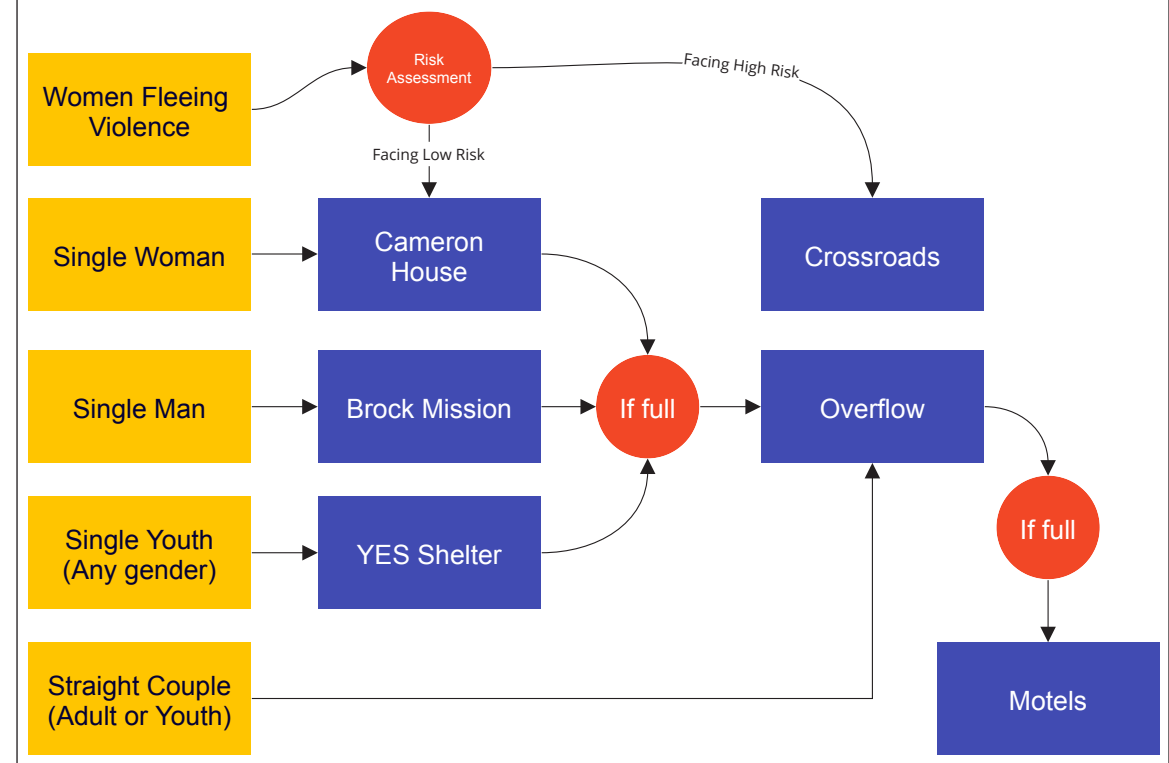
- For those who cannot be served by the other shelters
- 32 beds available
- Open 24/7
- Operated by Brock Mission
- Meals provided and showers available; no laundry facilities



Crossroads

- For women and families fleeing domestic violence
- Open 24/7
- Operated by YWCA

Who goes where?



NOTE: A client will sometimes be given a motel room if the shelter options available are inaccessible or dangerous to them. For example, we know of at least one trans person who was given a motel room because there were no safe options for them in the gender-segregated shelter system. **However,** we could find no official process for how these requests are made and evaluated.

How to Get a Shelter Bed

First Come First Served

If someone needs emergency shelter in Peterborough, the first step for them is to reach out. There are a few ways to do this:

- Call the centralized intake line
- Go to (or call) a shelter
- Go to (or call) social services

705-748-8830
(business hours)

705-926-0096
(after hours)

Of these options, only arriving in person at a shelter will lead to you getting a bed. This is because the shelters do not have waiting lists and do not reserve beds for people — the only way to get a bed is to physically show up when there is a vacancy.

However, the phone lines above might still be helpful. The person who answers can check to see where shelter beds are available and if you're eligible for them. They might also be able to connect you to other services that could help you avoid the shelter system. For example, if you have family in another city who it would be safe to stay with, social services could arrange transportation for you.



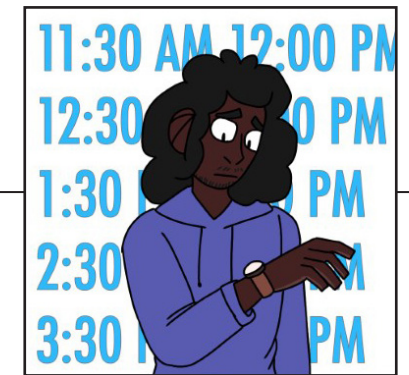
Sam got evicted 8 months ago and started couch-surfing with friends. But then his friends kicked him out.



So Sam went to the library and did some Googling. He learned about the centralized intake line.



Sam called the line. They tried to help Sam find a place to stay other than a shelter, but there weren't any other options. They told Sam Brock Mission was full and that he should try the Overflow shelter at 9pm instead.



Sam waited until 9pm.

Shelter Intake 1: Checking Eligibility

Before anyone is offered a bed at a shelter, they go through a screening process to make sure they're eligible. This process includes an attempt at diversion, checks to see if the client is fleeing violence, and a check to see if they have any service restrictions.

Diversion

Before being offered a bed, clients will go through a process called "shelter diversion." This is a process where a worker will strategize with a client to try to find an immediate housing solution other than the City's emergency shelters.

The client will be asked questions such as "Where did you stay last night?" and "Do you have any friends or family that could put you up tonight?" The goal is to identify any housing options the client might have that they haven't already pursued. A client will only be eligible for a shelter bed if the diversion process does not identify anywhere else that is safe where they could stay for the night.

If Fleeing Violence

Clients will also be asked if they are women fleeing domestic violence. If yes, clients will be referred to Crossroads for a risk assessment. The assessed risk level determines whether clients are eligible for Crossroads (high risk) or Cameron House (lower risk).

Are you Banned?

At this stage of intake, the worker you've connected with will also check to see if you have any active service restrictions (see page 24). If you do, that will impact which shelters you are eligible to use, and it might mean you aren't able to use the emergency shelter system at all.

Shelter Intake 2: Getting a Spot

If a client is determined to be eligible for a shelter bed in Peterborough and there is a bed available, a shelter worker will continue the intake process and may ask more specific questions about things such as allergies, whether a client is pregnant, whether they use drugs and whether they have any upcoming court dates. Clients don't have to answer these questions, but doing so might help shelter staff to offer better service.

Clients will also be advised of the shelter-specific rules they must abide by. Once intake is complete, the client is checked into a bed. This bed is theirs indefinitely, as long as they continue to abide by shelter expectations and do not have any other housing options.

Clients are expected to seek shelter at the YES Shelter, the Brock Mission or Cameron House first. If a bed is not available there, they will be directed to the Overflow to try there instead.

While the other shelters do intake all day long, the Overflow only starts intake at 9 p.m. each night.

If a bed isn't available at 9 p.m., clients will be asked to wait until midnight to see if a bed frees up due to someone missing curfew. If a bed is still not available at midnight, clients might be offered a motel room instead.

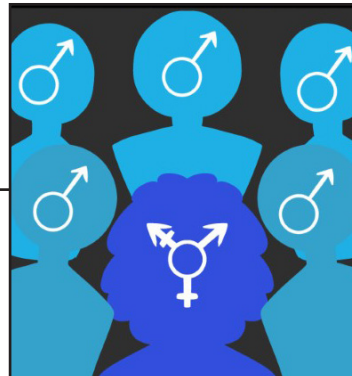
NOTE: For all shelters other than the Overflow, intake happens all day long. A vacancy could open up at any time. That means if a shelter is full in the morning, you might want to check again in the afternoon — a bed might have opened up and they are all first come first served.



At 9pm, Overflow staff told Sam there were no beds. But one might free up if somebody missed curfew that night.



So Sam waited until midnight to see if anything became available for him.



As he waited, Sam got nervous. As a trans man, would he feel safe in a dorm with cis-gendered men? He hoped a bed didn't free up, so he'd be offered a motel room instead.



But at 12:15, Sam went back to the Overflow. Staff said there was a bed available for him. He still preferred a motel room, but staff said that wasn't an option.



So Sam stayed at the Overflow shelter. In the morning, he worked with staff to put his name on the BNPL and start the assessment process to see what kinds of housing programs he might be eligible for.

Shelter Rules

Curfew: Shelter guests must return by midnight each night, or they risk losing their bed and being discharged.

Housing Plan: Shelter guests must demonstrate efforts to find housing.

Drugs and Alcohol: Clients under the influence are permitted. However, using and/or possessing drugs in the shelters is not permitted.

What Brock Mission Expects

Guests and clients are expected to

- | | |
|---|---|
| actively search for permanent housing. | understand the challenges of shared spaces and minimize conflict. |
| use amnesty boxes to store any contraband. | protect the privacy of everyone; no photos or recording. |
| not use substances including marijuana and alcohol on premises. | treat everyone as individuals in a non-discriminatory way. |
| not buy/sell anything or collect debt while on the premises. | respect the property of the shelter and those within it. |
| not participate in inappropriate intimacy and respect personal space. | be responsible for your own personal belongings. |
| not bring any weapons (real or replica) onto the property. | |

Consequences for Violating These Expectations

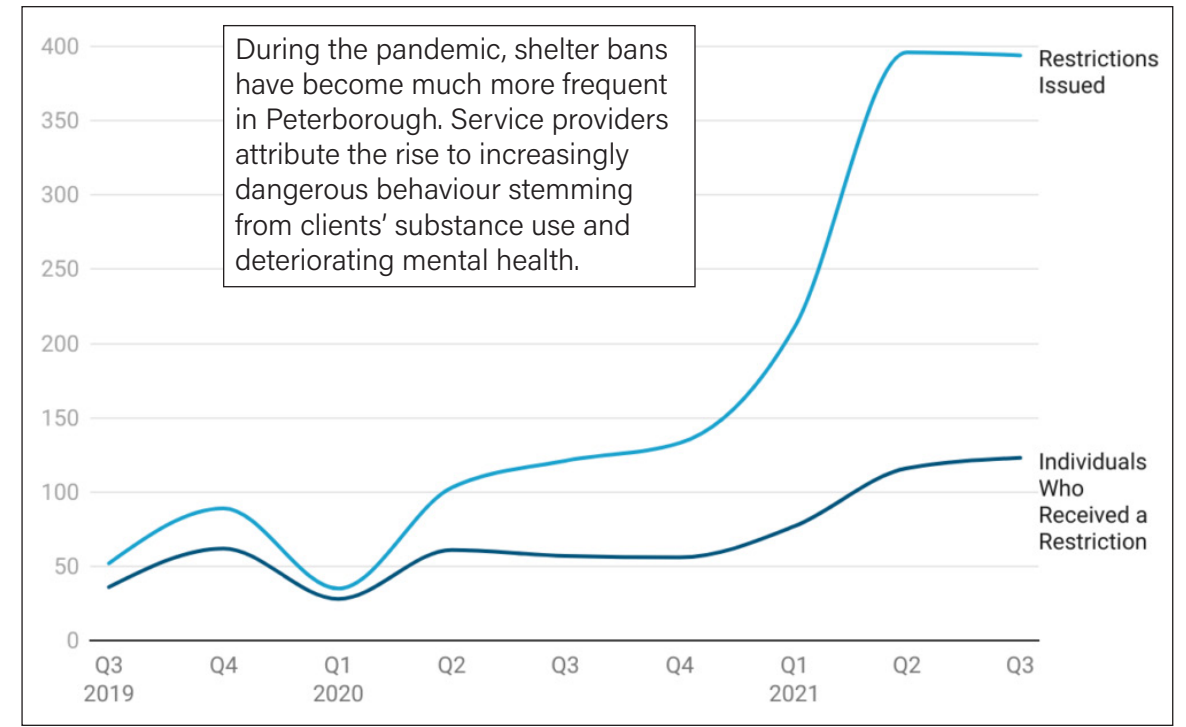
- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Service Restrictions | Discharged Out of Shelter |
|----------------------|---------------------------|



If you break the rules ...

One of the most common consequences shelter users face for breaking rules are service restrictions. Most people call service restrictions “bans.” Bans vary in severity: The more serious a client’s offending behaviour is, the longer they will be banned for. This chart from the City lays it all out.

Category	Description	Duration
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated breaches of Shelter Expectations Name calling/bullying including racism, sexism or any discriminatory language Accessing Restricted Areas Substance use on property and/or possession 	2 hours off property
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated breach of Level 1 Verbal threat of harm or violence (No immediate intent assessed) Smoking inside Filming on property 	24 hours off the property
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going predatory behavior On-going drug trafficking On-going discriminatory harassment (example: racism) Second breach of smoking inside Second breach of substance use on property 	2 – 15 days off the property at managers discretion
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violence Sexual Assault Arson Immediate threat and/or use of weapons Breaking into locked areas and resident rooms Serious Property Damage Pulling Fire Alarm 	At least 15 days off the property or longer at managers discretion (length decided on case by case basis, and reviewed every 3 months)
Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical violence or attempt to physically harm staff 	At least 15 days off the property or longer at managers discretion (length decided on case by case basis, and reviewed every 3 months)
Has Access to Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client is known to have access to safe, permanent housing 	As long as a client has access to housing
From Out of Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client is known to have no significant or historic connection to Peterborough Client is known to have available supports in another community 	As long as a client has supports available in another community
Not engaging in housing plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client has refused or avoided participating in a housing plan during their most recent stay at the emergency shelter 	At least 14 days off the property or longer at managers discretion (length decided on case by case basis, and reviewed every 3 months)



Graph courtesy of Peterborough Currents.

Level 1+2 bans do not lead to a discharge. You're free to return to your bed once they expire.

Level 3+above do trigger a discharge. Even after the ban expires, you might not get your bed back. It may have been given to someone else.

Level 5 bans are the most serious. They apply system wide. So people with this ban are left with no emergency shelter options.

A few more notes:

If a shelter client feels they have been given a service restriction without good reason, they can make an appeal. Each shelter handles its appeal process differently.

During extreme weather alerts, the City can direct shelters to temporarily suspend service restrictions, provided doing so does not put any individuals in immediate danger.



The Parks and Facilities Bylaw

Some people who are homeless in Peterborough choose camping as their preferred shelter option, while others are forced to camp because they are banned from the shelters.

The City of Peterborough's Parks and Facilities Bylaw prohibits this. Camping on municipal property can be punished with a fine of up to \$10,000. People who set up a tent in a park might be approached by the private security team that the City has contracted to enforce the bylaw.

This bylaw was passed in August, 2019. Within two years, there had been at least 814 requests for enforcement, including at least 163 formal tent complaints.

“What happened to my cheque!?” Social assistance, housing & shelter

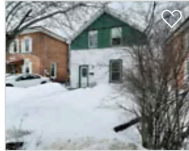
Social assistance is the primary source of income for many people who are homeless in Peterborough. In this section, we're focusing on the ways housing and shelter decisions can impact people's social assistance cheques.

Social assistance cheques are broken into two main categories: a basic needs allowance and a shelter allowance. In theory, the first is meant to pay for things like food, toiletries, and clothing while the second is meant to cover housing costs. (We say “in theory” because the size of both allowances is insufficient.)

You only receive the shelter allowance if you can prove that you are housed and paying rent. That means you'll lose it if you become homeless.

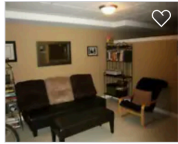
Family Type	New as of July 2020				
	OW	Basic Needs	Max Shelter	Max OCB	Total
Single		\$343	\$390	\$0	\$733
Single Parent - 1 child		\$360	\$642	\$121.75	\$1,123.75
Single Parent - 2 children		\$360	\$697	\$243.5	\$1,300.5
Couple		\$494	\$642	\$0	\$1,136
Couple - 1 child		\$494	\$697	\$121.75	\$1,312.75
Couple - 2 children		\$494	\$756	\$243.5	\$1,493.5
ODSP					
Single		\$672	\$497	\$0	\$1,169
Single Parent - 1 child		\$815	\$781	\$121.75	\$1,717.75
Single Parent - 2 children		\$815	\$846	\$243.5	\$1,904.5
Couple		\$969	\$781	\$0	\$1,750
Couple - 1 child		\$969	\$846	\$121.75	\$1,936.75
Couple - 2 children		\$969	\$918	\$243.5	\$2,130.5

1 bedroom for rent in Peterborough on Water street \$750.00
 Peterborough | 8 hours ago
 4 bedroom, 2 washroom house on Water street, available 1(one) bedroom one year lease. Starting date immediately. Trent university bus stop available in front of the door, short walk to shops ...



Hilliard Street / Oriole Drive | Beds: 4

Bachelor Apartment just outside downtown PTBO \$1,100.00
 Peterborough | 21/04/2022
 77 Aylmer Street North, Unit 2 Bachelor Apartment \$1,100.00 per month UTILITIES INCLUDED Available SOON Compact, open style format Kitchen with refrigerator and stove Clothes washer and dryer in the ...
 Triplex at the corner of Aylmer and Rink Streets



Aylmer Street North / Rink Street | Beds: Bachelor/Studio

Housing allowances can't cover even the cheapest apartments listed locally on Kijiji.



Arthur found a way to increase his income. He told his OW worker he rents a room, even though he doesn't. That means he receives a shelter allowance in addition to a basic needs allowance for a total of \$733 per month. But he doesn't actually pay rent, so Arthur can use the money to buy food, toiletries, and drugs. Arthur doesn't have anywhere to live. But he doesn't want to use the shelter system. If he does, OW will find out he's been lying, and his monthly income will drop from \$733 to \$343. So, Arthur chooses to sleep rough, even though this leads to confrontations with bylaw enforcement. On the plus side, sleeping rough means he's more likely to be offered housing through the BNPL.

Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministère des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires

MEMBER ID / CODE D'ID. DE MEMBRE	OFFICE BUREAU	CASE ORG CH. DE CAS	NO / N°	DATE	PERIOD COVERED / PERIODE ASSURÉE
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	29 Jan 21	FROM/DU 01 Jan 21 TO/AU 31 Jan 21
BENEFITS / PRESTATIONS	AMOUNT/MONTANT	DEDUCTIONS / DÉDUCTIONS	AMOUNT/MONTANT		
Basic Needs	815.00		0.00		
Shelter	781.00		0.00		
Total	1596.00	Total	0.00	Payment Amount / Montant du paiement 1596.00	

Statement of Assistance / Statement de l'assistance
Please retain

If you find housing after experiencing homelessness, you'll need your new landlord to fill out an "Intent to Rent" form so you can have your housing allowance reinstated.

But here's a glitch you might run into: ODSP cheques are issued at the end of the month they cover, not the beginning. So you won't get your full cheque until you've already been housed for a month. This means you'll have to cover your first month's rent some other way.

If this impacts you, consider applying for the City's Housing Stability Fund, which can provide funding to help cover first and last month's rent.

Conclusion

Thank you for reading this zine! For this phase of our project, we focused on how the City of Peterborough's housing and shelter systems are intended to operate.

Our goal was to understand and communicate the official account of how the Coordinated Access and Emergency Shelter systems are designed to work. But as we created this zine, a common response we heard from community members was: "But that's not how it actually works!"

In the next phase of our research, we're turning toward this divergence, and we will begin to investigate how the systems actually work, and how they're experienced by people navigating them. We'll be interviewing people who have used these systems and people who work within them to understand better how they work in practice. We'll be making another zine. So stay tuned!

Methods

To create this zine, we first consulted as many publicly-available documents as we could find. For example, the City's Coordinated Access Guide was extremely helpful. Then, we conducted informal interviews with key informants (system staff and municipal staff) to make sure we understood everything correctly.



Bibliography and Further Reading

Peterborough Homelessness Coordinated Access System Process Guide

<https://www.uwpeterborough.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Peterborough-Homelessness-Coordinated-Access-System.pdf>

A Year of Coordinated Access: The Road to Functional Zero in Peterborough City and County

<https://www.peterborough.ca/en/city-services/resources/Documents/Social-Services/Housing-and-Shelter/A-Year-of-Coordinated-Access-2019---2020Accessible.pdf>

City of Peterborough Road to Zero

<https://www.peterborough.ca/en/city-services/housing-and-shelter-homelessness-prevention.aspx#Built-for-Zero>

City of Peterborough's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan and Progress Reports

<https://www.peterborough.ca/en/city-hall/10-year-housing-and-homelessness-plan.aspx>

Understanding the Parks and Facilities Bylaw

<https://www.peterborough.ca/en/news/understanding-the-proposed-parks-and-facilities-by-law.aspx>

Shelter Websites

<https://yesshelter.ca>

<https://www.brockmission.ca>

<https://ywcapeterborough.org/crossroads-shelter>

Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program websites

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-works>

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-disability-support-program>



RESEARCH FOR
Social Change
LAB

Thanks for reading our zine! Please keep an eye out for the next one!

www.socialchangelab.ca