



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

Committee Report

HS-25-08

To: Chair and Members of the Joint Social Services and Land Ambulance Committee
From: Dave Purdy, Director of Housing Services
Date: Wednesday, May 14, 2025
Subject: 2024-25 Winter Response Plan Summary Report

Background:

The Winter Response Plan was developed to support individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness during the period of October 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025. During this period, County staff has been providing monthly updates with the most recent update as of February 28, 2025 ([HS-25-06](#)) presented at the April 9, 2025 Joint Social Services and Land Ambulance Committee. This final report provides a 2024-25 Winter Response overview and continues to capture the monthly activity consistent with previous reports. In an effort to provide a final report in a timely manner due to the recent end of the Winter Response Plan, County staff expedited several administrative procedures to provide service data for this final summary, however, a final budget analysis will be presented in June.

Update:

The following chart provides an update of the overall services and deliverables provided from October 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025:

Cumulative Unique Number of Individuals Served (October 1, 2024 – April 30, 2025)

Month	Location	Offered Norfolk	Accepted Norfolk	Hotel *	Received Tangibles	Received Transportation	Access To Storage
October	County	2	0	0	0	0	0
	City	19	8	0	0	0	0
November	County	0	0	26	0	0	0
	City	21	18	8	0	3	0
December	County	0	0	0	22	0	0
	City	29	11	0	4	0	4
January	County	0	0	0	22	0	0
	City	14	6	1	20	0	3
February	County	0	0	0	12	0	0
	City	11	5	0	8	3	0
March	County	0	0	0	9	0	0
	City	17	6	0	4	0	0
April	County	1	0	0	9	0	0
	City	13	5	0	5	0	0
Totals	County	3	0	26	74	0	0
	City	124	59	9	41	6	9
	Combined	127	59	35	115	6	9

* Note: County residents were offered hotels first

Key Highlights

The 2024-2025 Winter Response Plan aimed to support a minimum of 25 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness with temporary winter accommodations, tangibles, storage and transportation during the winter months. With the support of service partners and the temporary accommodation site at 128 Norfolk, our community has far surpassed this goal by providing temporary winter accommodation to 94 individuals, as well as tangible items to 115 individuals, storage to 9 individuals and transportation to 6 individuals.

We are also pleased to report that 24 of individuals who participated in temporary winter accommodations through the Winter Response Plan programme (25%) have obtained permanent housing by April 30, 2025 (9 in the County and 15 in the Guelph).

A number of contributing factors have been identified to support these successes. Consultation with the Lived Experience Advisory Group and service partners in the planning and implementation of the programme was an important contribution. The Lived Experience Advisory Group provided integral feedback in September 2024 regarding the tangible items provided to individuals that were not able to access emergency shelters or temporary accommodation. They also encouraged additional direct consultation with all individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The most popular tangibles included hot packs, sleeping bags, tarps, sleeping mats, clothing, emergency blankets and tents.

Ongoing communication and meetings with a number of health and housing partners to discuss the processes and progress of the winter response plan was also an important component. County staff initiated a coordinated outreach response with all services providers to ensure that services adequately responded to the unique needs of individuals experiencing homelessness across the service delivery area. For example, experiences of homelessness in the County is less visible given its large geographic area (97% of our service delivery area) and is more isolated especially given there are no emergency shelters or a temporary accommodation site in the County. That said, fewer service partners providing services in the County were able to reach each individual in a coordinated and seamless manner. In comparison, experiences of homelessness in urban areas is more visible and has the benefit of more emergency response services and spaces to go. That said, coordinated and seamless services require more work given multiple services providing support to the same individual. The goal of coordinated outreach services will continue as part of the workplan of the Provision of Basic Needs Sub-Working Group of the Health and Housing Planning Table.

The introduction of accountability measures was also a contributing factor to housing placements. County staff introduced the Housing Engagement Plan which identified a plan/pathway to permanent housing (which may have included health services) as well as a Housing Engagement Agreement which highlighted the participant's code of conduct, programme requirements, and implications for not following through on expectations.

The Housing Engagement Plan assessed each individuals' housing goal which focused on self-choice, and was collaborative in nature. The level of engagement lead to increased positive outcomes with

housing placements, the number of tangibles distributed, coordinated service delivery, and building relationships with individuals that were not previously connected to housing wrap around supports. It is also important to highlight that as of March 31, 2025, there are 16 individuals in Guelph experiencing unsheltered homelessness (who may have frequently or infrequently accessed emergency shelter services) despite being offered a 24/7 temporary accommodation during the winter months. These individuals were surveyed in March and recommendations are included in the Committee report, Ending Chronic Homelessness.

Transitioning Out of the Winter Response Plan

As of April 30, 2025, 29 individuals continue to access temporary accommodations (23 at Norfolk and 6 at Hotels – 5 County/1 City). Individuals staying at 128 Norfolk will be able to continue to stay to continue their progress in their housing plan. Individuals staying in hotels will continue to be supported for up to another month to continue their housing journey.

County staff will be conducting a debrief with service partners and participants to review the process and lessons learned throughout the implementation of the 2024-25 Winter Response Plan. These conversations will help inform future Winter Response Planning and approaches.

Financial Summary

At the time of budget preparation, it was estimated that a total budget of \$662,300 (\$66,200 County and \$596,100 City) would be required to support the Winter Response Plan. Total actual costs incurred to date total \$656,955 and are summarized in the table below:

Support Provided	2024	2025	Total
Norfolk operations	90,516	225,322	315,838
Motel	116,741	195,181	311,922
Tangibles	18,938	10,258	29,196
Total	226,195	430,761	656,955

The costs reported above are for both the County and the City, with the County share being \$304,949 and the City share at \$352,006. The higher usage of motels in the County is the driving factor of these costs differing from the cost split originally anticipated at the time of budget. Staff are collecting final invoices, and it is expected that total costs will be known in the next month.

Any impact the one-time encampment funding or Reaching Home funding may have on the municipal cost of the winter shelter response will be evaluated in the upcoming financial variance report schedule for June.

Strategic Action Plan:

This report relates to the following objectives and priorities in the County's Strategic Action Plan:

Tackling a Major Community Opportunity – Housing

Making the best decisions for the betterment of the Community

Recommendation:

That the Joint Social Services and Land Ambulance Committee recommend to County Council to receive the report, 2024-25 Winter Response Plan Summary Report, for information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Purdy', written in a cursive style.

Dave Purdy
Director of Housing Services

In consultation with/approved by:
Shauna Calder, Manager of Finance
Luisa Artuso, Social Services Administrator
Scott Wilson, Chief Administrative Officer