



# HOUSING ALWAYS

BY THE CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
THAMES VALLEY

## BACKGROUND

London Middlesex faces the same challenges as many communities across the province when it comes to unaffordable rent and very low vacancy in the private market.

Social and community housing are some of the few providers in the area that offer affordable rent. Due to the nature of historic waitlist management, some of these buildings have strong concentrations of high acuity tenants, and providers struggle to offer supports that could help stabilize these high risk tenancies.

As the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) focused on supporting the homeless population through programs like Housing First, they also wanted to ensure that they were preventing homelessness. They recognized that affordable housing alone wasn't the only contributing factor to a thriving community, and saw an opportunity in helping community housing providers prevent evictions, and in that way ensuring people stay housed.

In May 2020, CMHA was able to develop a sustainable and impactful solution to evictions by working closely with their largest community housing provider, London Middlesex Community Housing (LMCH). They partnered with the City Of London Homeless Prevention Team, Coordinated Access, and the Housing Services Manager to put together a business case that would work, and leveraged existing staff resources within Supportive Housing at CMHA to create Housing Always.



## THE PROCESS

London Middlesex Community Housing (LMCH) set out to interview tenants in one of their buildings where they were experiencing higher than average tenancy and community issues. From these conversations, they learned that not only did tenants want help in making their community a better place, they were also willing to contribute to the work.

LMCH then embedded the supports of CMHA directly into one of their most problematic and highly stigmatized buildings, where the team committed to supporting the entire building, regardless of whether the tenant participated in the program or not.

The Housing Services Manager approved their Local Housing Corporation as 'Special Needs Housing Administrator' which supported the Housing Always program to fill vacancies through the city's Coordinated Access. This ensured a good tenant mix of varying levels of acuity as part of the building community.

The team also secured a rental strategy that included additional supplements that established affordable rents and program investment. By doing this, the additional investment can be redirected to needed services such as building security, renovations, and upkeep.



## IMPACT

Since May 1, 2020:



**20**

Individuals have been housed

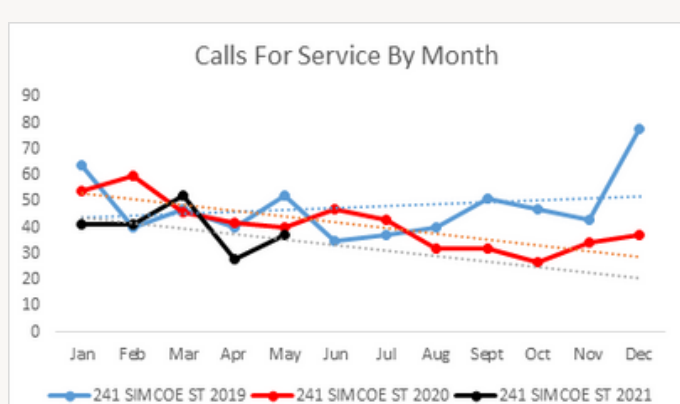


**25+**

Individuals were provided with crisis intervention, eviction prevention, and support.

*"I care about this place and the people that live here, thank you (CMHA) for caring too"*

**- TENANT**



Since the start of the program, there has been a decline in police calls.

CMHA is currently gathering more data to further measure the impact of the program in the community.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Housing Always has been so successful that CMHA expanded their services to a second building with LMCH in continued partnership with the City, and they received new funding through the Southwest Local Health Integration Network to further expand the program.

With this momentum, they also decided to create another program with their city housing service manager and have begun Housing Always outreach to support 65+ community providers and their tenants, where Housing Always has become an innovative and essential solution to their community housing strategy.



## ABOUT CMHA

CMHA Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services is an integrated mental health and addiction agency providing community-based supports and services to individuals aged 12 and up across Elgin, Middlesex, and Oxford Counties

[www.cmhatv.ca](http://www.cmhatv.ca)



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