

# PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination / Updated June 2020



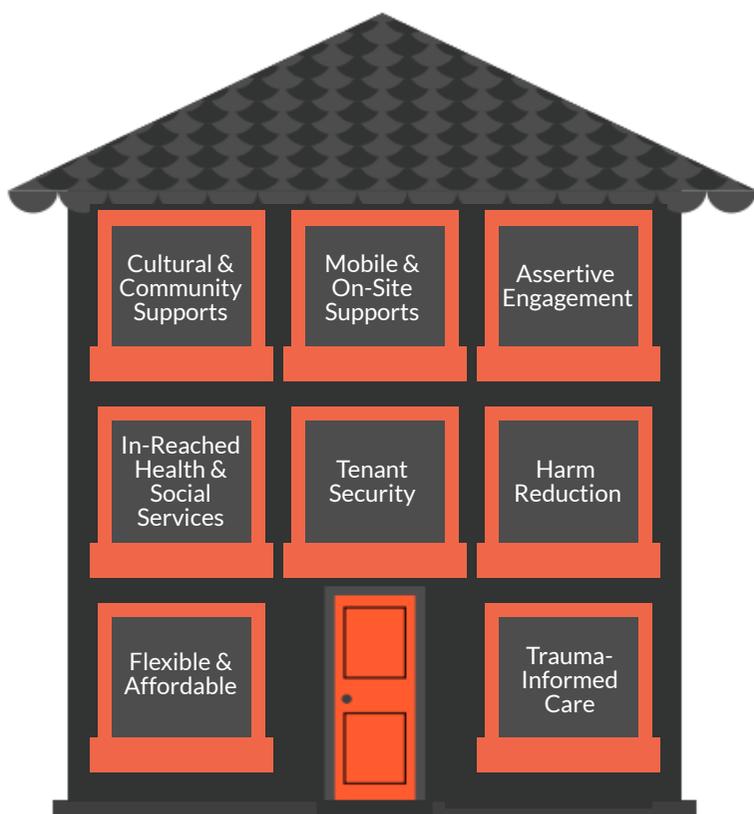
## DEFINING PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is an evidence-based and cost-effective solution for people who are chronically homeless and/or highly vulnerable because of long-term disabilities, such as: mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, substance use disorders, and chronic health conditions.

### PSH can be further understood by considering each component:

- **Permanent** - Leases are held by tenants without limits on length of stay. PSH is not intended to be transitional or temporary.
- **Supportive** - PSH links rental assistance, such as a rent supplement, with access to individualized, flexible and voluntary supports to address needs and maintain housing stability. Supports are typically provided by on-site staff and can be accessed 24 hours/7 days a week.
- **Housing** - PSH usually includes independent units with common spaces that are in one home or building. PSH units could also be scattered-site units depending on the acuity level of the individual and availability of the supports (provided either through home visits or in a community-based setting).

## KEY COMPONENTS OF THE PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING MODEL:



*Adapted from a graphic developed by Homeward Trust Edmonton to illustrate the key components of the permanent supportive housing model.*

## DEFINING HOUSING FIRST

Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry.

### Core Features of Housing First in the Context of Permanent Supportive Housing Models:

- Few to no programmatic prerequisites to permanent housing entry
- Low barrier admission policies
- Rapid and streamlined entry into housing
- Supportive services are voluntary but can and should be used to persistently engage tenants to ensure housing stability
- Tenants have full rights, responsibilities, and legal protections
- Practices and policies to prevent lease violations and evictions
- Applicable in a variety of housing models

## ESTABLISHING SITE SELECTION CRITERIA:

- **Scale:** Size of a project should be based on housing need and capacity to develop and manage
- **Housing type & construction:** A model may be scattered-site or single-site and a project may involve new construction, rehabilitation or conversion
- **Acquisition or lease costs:** The parameters of possible funding sources may impact options
- **Zoning considerations:** It is important to identify zoning restrictions to inform site search
- **Location:** Location is critical. The following factors must be evaluated: public transportation, employment opportunities, neighbourhood amenities, community-based services, day care, public schools and related programs, security
- **Community acceptance:** In planning for new projects, there are significant issues that can create community acceptance problems that should be considered

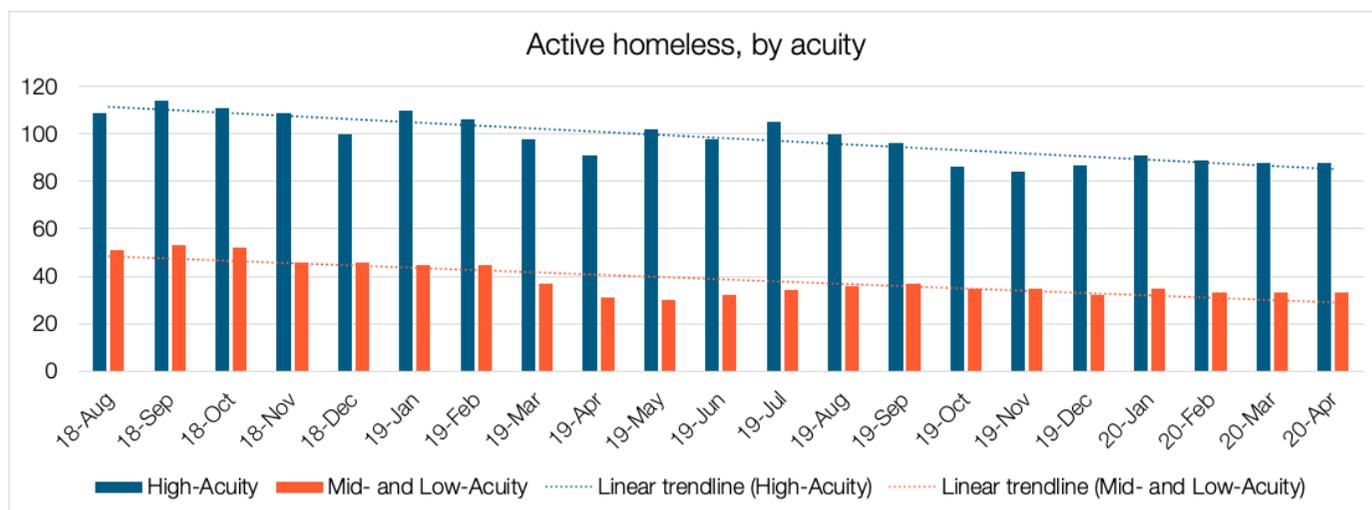


## ESTABLISHING ELIGIBILITY FOR PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:

Eligibility for PSH considers both an individual's financial and support needs. The model and intensity of supports provided reflect tenant population and their corresponding needs. Individuals experiencing homelessness who have been assessed as high-acuity have a high depth of need and should be considered eligible for PSH.

## DETERMINING PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING NEED TO INFORM PLANNING:

An analysis of the By-Name List (BNL), a real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness in a community, can provide a valuable starting point for determining which PSH models and what intensity of supports may be required to meet the needs of high acuity individuals experiencing homelessness. Below is a snapshot of the Guelph-Wellington BNL between August 2018 and April 2020.



As seen in the above chart, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness can fluctuate on a monthly basis. This variability combined with individual choice can impact demand for different types of housing, including PSH. For this reason, setting a definitive number for how many people require PSH is not recommended, however having an understanding of need is important for planning.

Average rates from August 2018 - April 2020	Mid- & Low-Acuity Individuals	High-Acuity Individuals
 <b>Move-in rate</b> (# of move-ins from the current month divided by # of active homeless from the previous month)	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>10%</b>
 <b>Rate of return to homelessness from housing</b> (# of returns from housing from the current month divided by the # of individuals who were housed from the previous month)	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>

In April 2020<sup>1</sup>, there were **88** high acuity individuals experiencing homelessness on the By-Name List. All of these individuals should be considered for some form of PSH.

**29** of these individuals experience significant challenges in finding and maintaining housing  
 (From August 2018 - April 2020, they returned from housing at least twice or were homeless for 80% of the time or more)

**59** of these individuals also face challenges, but likely do not require the same degree of support as the 29 individuals

The 29 individuals should be considered for a **high intensity PSH model** that provides supports to very high-acuity homeless individuals who are experiencing complex mental health, addiction, & physical health barriers.

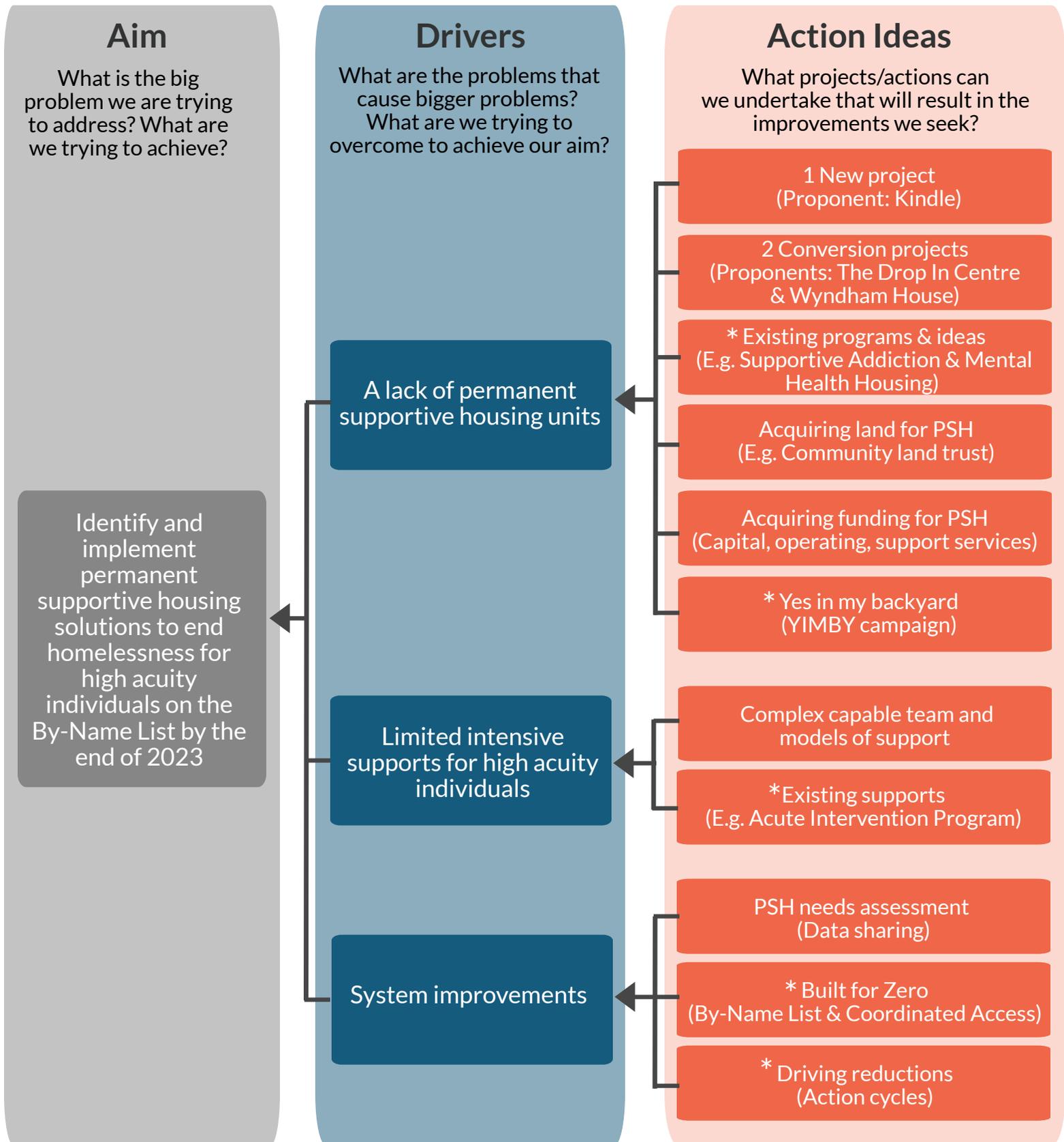
The 59 individuals should be considered for a **PSH model with intensive case management supports**.

It is also **important to consider outreach**, as **60%** of the 29 individuals were most frequently unsheltered sleeping in locations unfit for human habitation.

<sup>1</sup> Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to consider unexpected impacts to the BNL since April 2020.

# DRIVER DIAGRAM: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION ON PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

The following driver diagram has been informed by numerous meetings with community leaders, community partners, peers, and key players taking action on permanent supportive housing. Its purpose is to identify opportunities for action and inform a comprehensive community plan for permanent supportive housing across the continuum of need for individuals experiencing homelessness in Guelph-Wellington.



\* Existing projects & programs that are already underway.

Carrying out the above work requires collaboration, coordination, staff time, funding, expertise, a shared commitment to end homelessness & a data driven approach.

Sources are available upon request. This fact sheet is complementary to a Poverty Task Force report on PSH.

