		Section #	Policy #
Region of Waterloo	Housing Services Prioritized Access to Housing Support (PATHS) Provider Protocol	Approval Date: May 24, 2018	Revision Date: August 30, 2018
Title:	**Prioritization**		
Responsibility:	Region Housing Services		
Applies to:	Housing Stability System, including PATHS Team, PATHS Partners, Other System Partners		

Background

When demand for housing support coordinated through the Prioritized Access to Housing Support (PATHS) Process exceeds supply, there is a need to determine how people will be rank ordered for an offer – from highest priority to lowest priority. Highest priority households get access to resources before lower priority households. People with higher service needs and levels of vulnerability are supported to end their homelessness before those with lower service needs and levels of vulnerability.

This Provider Protocol outlines how the PATHS Prioritization Matrix is operationalized in Waterloo Region. For greater fairness and equity, rules are transparent and they are applied consistently across the region for all populations. The prioritization process is data-informed and supported by strong engagement within Level 2 programs, dedicated service navigation support through the PATHS Team and case conferencing (e.g., to facilitate creative problem-solving).

The PATHS Prioritization Matrix is used to determine how PATHS applicants are matched with a housing support vacancy and then rank-ordered (prioritized) for an invitation (where more than one household is both interested in the vacancy and meets vacancy eligibility criteria). The matching and prioritization steps are completed by Region staff using information documented in the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS). For every housing support vacancy, up to three households are invited to consider the vacancy. PATHS Service Navigators confirm interest in the vacancy with the household(s) and provide support through the Housing Support Agreement process, which looks different depending on the housing support vacancy

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(e.g. Supportive Housing, Portable Home-Based Support, Other System Partner). This process typically involves the following: invitation, tour and initial interview, support planning meetings, documentation, activities and stays, the housing offer, intake and warm transfer.

Three priority populations have been confirmed for the local Housing Stability System through the PATHS Framework:

- **Category A –** people with greater depth of need who are experiencing chronic homelessness.
- **Category B –** people who are highly vulnerable and have less ability to survive homelessness.
- **Category C –** people who have been living without housing the longest, with people staying in Emergency Shelter prioritized over people staying in unsheltered locations.

    Appendix A: Prioritization Matrix shows the specific criteria for each category.

Operating Details:

The following criteria outline how households experiencing homelessness are prioritized for housing support through the PATHS Process. The VI-SPDAT (triage) and Full SPDAT (assessment) are the common tools used by the Housing Stability System to assess the depth of need of households experiencing homelessness. Note that the first two criteria in Category A serve as the primary way in which households are prioritized. The remaining five criteria in Category B and Category C serve as tie breakers if the first two criteria result in tied rankings. For example, should there be five households that are all experiencing chronic homelessness with a VI-SPDAT score of 16, criterion 3 would be used as a tie breaker. Should all five households be considered tri-morbid, then criterion 4 would be used as a tie breaker, and so on.

Category A

1. **Chronic Homelessness:** The first criterion prioritizes households, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance use issues), who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year. Chronic homelessness is tracked using HIFIS where the sheltering type is listed as one of the following: makeshift/street, emergency sheltered or transitional housing.

2. **VI-SPDAT and Full SPDAT Score:** This second criterion prioritizes vulnerability, as determined by their total VI-SPDAT and Full SPDAT score. Only households with medium scores are eligible for Level 3 housing support programs. Likewise, only households with high scores are eligible for Level 4 housing support programs. See Appendix A: Prioritization Matrix for more information.

"Medium" Acuity	"High" Acuity
Youth: 4-9 (VI-SPDAT); 20-33 (SPDAT)	Youth: 10+ (VI-SPDAT); 34+ (SPDAT)
Adults: 4-9 (VI-SPDAT); 20-33 (SPDAT)	Adults: 10+ (VI-SPDAT); 34+ (SPDAT)
Families: 4-8 (VI-SPDAT); 27-53 (SPDAT)	Families: 9+ (VI-SPDAT); 54+ (SPDAT)

Category B

3. **Tri-morbidity:** The third criterion prioritizes the presence of co-occurring mental health, physical health and substance use issues (called tri-morbidity). Tri-morbidity is identified through self-reported information in the Wellness domain of the VI-SPDAT with points for each of the following: physical health (" yes" to any questions 15-19), substance use ("yes" to question 20 and/or 21), and mental health ("yes" to question 22 and/or 23). Tri-morbidity is also identified as a score of 3 or 4 in all of the following domains of the Full SPDAT: Mental Health and Wellness and Cognitive Functioning, Physical Health and Wellness, and Substance Use.

4. **Elevated Risk:** The fourth criterion prioritizes involvement in abusive, higher-risk and/or exploitative situations. Elevated risk is identified through self-reported information in the Risks domain of the VI-SPDAT with points given for Risk of Exploitation specific questions ("yes" to question 8 and/or 9). Elevated risk is also identified as a score of 3 or 4 in the Involvement in Higher Risk and/or Exploitive Situations domain of the Full SPDAT.

5. **Critical Safety:** The fifth criterion prioritizes households who have exhausted most of their sheltering options in Waterloo Region and have nowhere else to go that is safe and appropriate. This is documented in an active Critical Safety Plan.

Category C

6. **Length of Time Living Without Permanent Housing:** Should all of the above criteria be equal, people who have been living without housing the longest based on the date they are added to the PATHS list are prioritized, with people living staying in Emergency Shelter offered housing support first, followed by unsheltered locations.

For additional information, see also: Prioritized Access to Housing Support (PATHS) Framework approved by Regional Council in December 2017

Appendix A: Prioritization Matrix

Category	Prioritization Factors for Level 3 Housing Support Programs (Portable Home-Based Support)	Prioritization Factors for Level 4 Housing Support Programs (Portable Home-Based Support and Supportive Housing)
(A) **Acuity and Chronic Homelessness**	Chronic Homelessness AND "Medium" Acuity	Chronic Homelessness AND "High" Acuity
(B) **Specific Vulnerablies**	Tri-Morbidity	
	Elevated Risk	
	Critical Safety List	
(C) **Housing History**	**Length of Time Living Without Permanent Housing** **Staying in Emergency Shelter or Living in Unsheltered Locations**	

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Appendix B: Matching and Prioritization in PATHS

The process below illustrates the automation of matching and prioritization:

Vacancy Notification:

- Region notified of a Supportive Housing vacancy at Service Provider X

- Vacancy is in Shared Living with Own Room. Need to refer at least one household that:
  1) Both wants the vacancy and meets the eligibility criteria (matching); and
  2) Ranks high for vulnerability factors (prioritization)

Matching:

Take the following list:

- Reminder: Vacancy is in Supportive Housing, shared living with own room. No additional eligibility factors are considered (e.g. gender identity, accessibility).

Looking for a Yes

First Name	Contact Person & Agency	PATHS Status	Date added to PATHS	Total time Waiting on PATHS (in months)	Initial or Most Recent VI-SPDAT (calculated) (Updated Based on Full)	Trimorbidity	Elevated Risk	Critical Safety Plan	Chronic - Y/N (calc) (homeless => 6 months in prev. year)	Housing Needs and Preference Form Date Complete	Preferred Location	Preference for STEP Home	CHPI SH Shared with Own Room Y/N	CHPI SH Y/N	Completed CHAC Application Y/N	Preference for Thresholds (IHH or ASfh Y/N
A		Assigned	21-Aug-2017	6	17	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	21-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
B		Added	1-Jul-2016	20	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety	Yes	1-Jan-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C		Added	16-Aug-2017	7	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	16-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
D		Added	1-Dec-2014	39	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3-Oct-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
E		Added	1-Dec-2014	39	16	N/A	No	No	Yes	1-Feb-17	Cambridge	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
F		Added	9-Jan-2018	2	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	24-Jul-17	Cambridge	Yes	No	No	No	No
H		Added	24-Apr-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	14-Nov-17	Cambridge	Yes	No	No	No	No
I		Assigned	21-Nov-2017	3	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety	Yes	21-Nov-17	both K-W	Yes	No	No	No	No
J		Added	1-Sep-2016	18	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety	Yes	4-May-17	Cambridge	Yes	No	No	No	No
K		Added	16-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	16-May-17	both K-W	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
L		Added	17-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	17-May-17	both K-W	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
N		Added	17-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	17-May-17	Cambridge	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
O		Assigned	15-Apr-2015	35	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	29-Nov-16	both K-W	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
P		Added	31-Jan-2018	1	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	23-Jun-17	Cambridge	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Q		Added	30-Aug-2017	6	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety	Yes	30-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
R		Added	28-Aug-2015	30	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	24-Mar-17	Kitchener	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
S		Added	22-Feb-2017	12	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	10-Mar-17	Cambridge	Yes	No	No	No	No

- Filter for a "Yes" in Shared Living with Own Room. Four people remain for prioritization.

First Name	Contact Person & Agency	PATHS Status	Date added to PATHS	Total time Waiting on PATHS (in months)	Initial or Most Recent VI-SPDAT (calculated) (Updated Based on Full)	Tri-morbidity	Elevated Risk	Critical Safety Plan	Chronic - Y/N (calc) (homeless => 6 months in prev. year)	Housing Needs and Preference Form Date Complete	Preferred Location	Preference for STEP Home	CHPI SH Shared with Own Room Y/N	CHPI SH Y/N	Completed CHAC Application Y/N	Preference for Thresholds (RH or ASH) Y/N
B		Added	1-Jul-2016	20	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety	Yes	1-Jan-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C		Added	16-Aug-2017	7	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	16-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
D		Added	1-Dec-2014	39	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3-Oct-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
N		Added	17-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	17-May-17	Cambridge	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Prioritization:

Apply the prioritization matrix to determine how households are rank ordered for referral.

- Based on Acuity and Chronic Homelessness (A), all four are tied. Move to Specific Vulnerabilities (B).

(A) Acuity and Chronic Homelessness	Medium Acuity AND Chronic Homelessness	High Acuity AND Chronic Homelessness
(B) Specific Vulnerablies	Tri-Morbidity Elevated Risk Critical Safety List	
(C) Housing History	Length of Time Living Without Permanent Housing	

Acuity   Chronic Homelessness

First Name	Contact Person & Agency	PATHS Status	Date added to PATHS	Total time Waiting on PATHS (in months)	Initial or Most Recent VI-SPDAT (calculated) (Updated Based on Full)	Tri-morbidity	Elevated Risk	Critical Safety Plan	Chronic - Y/N (calc) (homeless => 6 months in prev. year)	Housing Needs and Preference Form Date Complete	Preferred Location	Preference for STEP Home	CHPI SH Shared with Own Room Y/N	CHPI SH Y/N	Completed CHAC Application Y/N	Preference for Thresholds (RH or ASH) Y/N
B		Added	1-Jul-2016	20	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety	Yes	1-Jan-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C		Added	16-Aug-2017	7	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	16-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
D		Added	1-Dec-2014	39	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3-Oct-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
N		Added	17-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	17-May-17	Cambridge	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

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- Based on Specific Vulnerabilities (B), all scored a Yes for Tri-morbidity and Elevated Risk. Only one has a Critical Safety Plan – they would be rank ordered #1

(A) Acuity and Chronic Homelessness	Medium Acuity AND Chronic Homelessness	High Acuity AND Chronic Homelessness
(B) Specific Vulnerablies	Tri-Morbidity Elevated Risk Critical Safety List	
(C) Housing History	Length of Time Living Without Permanent Housing	

Trimorbidity   Elevated Risk   Critical Safety Plan

First Name	Contact Person & Agency	PATHS Status	Date added to PATHS	Total time Waiting on PATHS (in months)	Initial or Most Recent VI-SPDA (Update Based on Full)	Trimorbidity	Elevated Risk	Critical Safety Plan	Chronic - Y/N (calc) (homeless => 6 months in prev. year)	Housing Needs and Preference Form Date Complete	Preferred Location	Preference for STEP Home	CHPI SH Shared with Own Room Y/N	CHPI SH Y/N	Completed CHAC Application Y/N	Preference for Thresholds (NH or ASH) Y/N
B		Added	1-Jul-2016	20	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety	Yes	1-Jan-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C		Added	16-Aug-2017	7	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	16-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
D		Added	1-Dec-2014	39	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3-Oct-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
N		Added	17-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	17-May-17	Cambridge	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

- To rank the remaining three households, we look at Housing History (C), or the total time waiting on PATHS. Person D has been waiting the longest, followed by Person N

Length of Time Living Without Permanent Housing

First Name		Contact Person & Agency	PATHS Status	Date added to PATHS	Total time Waiting on PATHS (in months)	Initial or Most Recent VI-SPDA (Update Based on Full)	Trimorbidity	Elevated Risk	Critical Safety Plan	Chronic - Y/N (calc) (homeless => 6 months in prev. year)	Housing Needs and Preference Form Date Complete	Preferred Location	Preference for STEP Home	CHPI SH Shared with Own Room Y/N	CHPI SH Y/N	Completed CHAC Application Y/N	Preference for Thresholds (NH or ASH) Y/N
B	#1		Added	1-Jul-2016	20	16	Yes	Yes	Critical Safety	Yes	1-Jan-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C	#4		Added	16-Aug-2017	7	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	16-Aug-17	both K-W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
D	#2		Added	1-Dec-2014	39	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3-Oct-17	All/Any	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
N	#3		Added	17-May-2017	10	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	17-May-17	Cambridge	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Refer to Service Provider:

- At least one household is referred to the Service Provider with the vacancy. A referral initiates a Housing Support Agreement. This includes several parts (e.g., invitation, tour/interview, follow-ups, intake, and move-in transitions). The end result is either an acceptance or decline of the housing support offer.

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